THE

CONSTITUTIONAL DEFENCE

OF

ENGLAND,

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL.

Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts ii. 37.

"*All men may, nay, all men must, if they possess the faculty of thinking, reason*
"*upon every thing which sufficiently interests them to become objects of their attention;*
"*and among the objects of the attention of free men, the principles of Government, the*
"*Constitution of particular Governments, and, above all, the Constitution of the Go-*
"*vernment under which they live, will naturally engage attention and provoke spe-*
"*culation. The power of communication of thoughts and opinions is the gift of God,*
"*and the freedom of it is the source of all science, the first fruits and ultimate happi-*
"*ness of society; and therefore it seems to follow, that human laws ought not to in-*
"*terpose, nay, cannot interpose, to prevent the communication of sentiments and opinions*
"*in voluntary societies of men; all which is true, with this single reservation, that*
"*those assemblies are to be so composed, and so conducted, as not to endanger the public*
"*peace and good order of the Government under which they live.*"

Lord Chief Justice Eyre. See *Gurney's Trial of Thomas Hardy*, I. 9.

BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT, ESQ.

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PREFACE.

As the defence which the author has undertaken aſſumes the form of a Speech, it will probably cauſe a few natural inquiries, touching which, civility ſeems to require that he ſhould give his readers the neceſſary ſatisfaction; how little material ſoever it may be under what vehicle a man conveys his thoughts to the public.

The truth is, that what might now be called the abſtract of the following pages, was intended to have been ſpoken on the nomination of Candidates for the County of Lincoln, on the 6th of May laſt; but the author was prevented by cauſes which, under ſimilar circumſtances, conſign many an intended ſpeech to oblivion.

A voice naturally weak was rendered ſtill weaker than common by indiſpoſition, and a frame peculiarly ſubject to ſuffer from expoſure to bad weather, made it inconvenient to be uncovered in a rainy and tempeſtuous day.

Even thoſe who had not ſuch impediments to encounter, he believes, were but very imperfectly heard by the body of Freeholders then aſſembled in the Caſtle Yard.

The author might add, that the badges of party which were diſplayed, and the zeal which his brethren in general ſeemed to manifeſt in favour of particular Candidates they had *previouſly eſpouſed*, did not promiſe him a very patient hearing of arguments for ſhewing that, *prior to the adoption of any Gentlemen*, as proper Repreſentatives in the Legiſlature, the Freeholders would have done well to have made themſelves fully acquainted with the political opinions of thoſe Gentlemen, on certain points of the higheſt importance.

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Had the author, indeed, felt conſcious of powers for delivering his ſpeech in a ſtorm, with all thoſe charms and graces of elocution, and with that captivating energy, which ſteals the hearer from himſelf and from the inferior objects and intereſts of the moment, devoting him with enthuſiaſm to the cauſe of his country, and rivetting his attention to objects and intereſts of the greateſt magnitude, he ſhould not have been diſcouraged by any appearances of premature adoption.

But, feeling himſelf unequal to ſuch a taſk, and reflecting that what he had to ſay, although ſtrictly applicable to the buſineſs of the day, might not be uſeleſs, even after the Election ſhould be over, he deſiſted at that time from his purpoſe; and has ſince endeavoured to render his Speech not unworthy of peruſal in print.

If it contain matter which ought to be imprinted on the memory of his countrymen in general,

general, the voice of the preſs will be a better voice than his own for its communication.

Recent events upon the continent, leading, as the author thinks, to conſequences more ſerious than any that have yet made an impreſſion on the public mind in this iſland, are ſtrong additional motives to thoſe he felt before for the preſent publication.

All he ſhall now ſay in apology for this Speech is, that what mature reflection has taught him to think, that he is prompted by a ſenſe of duty to ſpeak; and he feels a perſuaſion, that he ſhall not altogether ſpeak in vain; becauſe he ſpeaks to Engliſhmen.

Auguſt 1, 1796.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

ALTHOUGH it may perhaps be a treſpaſs on ſtrict form, to appear to break a *Speech* into a number of diſtinct parts; yet, in order to furniſh the reader with ſome convenient reſting places, the author has taken the liberty of marking ſuch diviſions of his ſubject numerically, as diſcourſes are ſometimes divided into ſections without an actual diſcontinuance of matter, or any break in the thread of argument.

KING, LORDS, AND COMMONS,

DEFENDED AGAINST

DOMESTIC ENEMIES.

A SPEECH,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO THE HIGH SHERIFF AND FREEHOLDERS OF THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN, ON THE 6TH OF MAY, 1796.

I. *Mr. High Sheriff, and Gentlemen Freeholders!*

SENSIBLE that your time is precious, I will not treſpaſs on that time more than is abſolutely neceſſary. We have now had three perſons of ſome conſideration in the county propoſed to our choice; and thoſe who have nominated the parties, or ſupported the nominations reſpectively, have ſaid much in their praiſe, and might, I doubt not, have ſaid much more with the greateſt truth. But, as yet, Gentlemen, we have heard nothing ſaid on a ſubject, which to us, as Engliſhmen, as men having a right to a government affording and protecting *political liberty*, is of infinitely more importance than any of thoſe topics on which the friends of the Candidates have reſpectively exerted their eloquence.

My object, therefore, in riſing on the preſent occaſion, and at a period ſo big as the preſent with awful events to our country, is to offer my reaſons why we ought not to proceed lightly, nor incautiouſly, to a nomination of perſons to repreſent this county in Parliament; nor without ſome aſſurances of their knowledge and fidelity on the particular ſubject to which I have alluded.

If, Gentlemen, I am to judge of your feelings by my own, I ſhould ſuppoſe you may imagine that, during the probable exiſtence of the next Parliament, events of the greateſt magnitude, and of the deepeſt importance to England, are likely to take place.

To ſpeak my own free ſentiments, it is a period, within which the Engliſh conſtitution will have to ſtruggle for its very exiſtence. If preſervation await it, that preſervation, it ſhould ſeem, can only be expected through the medium of ſevere calamity, or ſome terrifying apprehenſion, ſufficient to arouſe the nation from its political lethargy; and of a quality to open its eyes to that which is its real and only formidable danger. But without ſome ſuch event, what can be expected, but that our political freedom will fall an early ſacrifice to vigilant corruption on the part of ambitious men, and to blind confidence on the part of the people.

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With ſuch proſpects before us, can we, on any light conſideration;—can we, without motives the moſt powerful and cogent, fix on our political Protectors?—on national Saviours? Here, Gentlemen, let me for a moment pauſe, and requeſt you to conſider what ſort of characters the times and the perilous ſituation of our country demand. And let me exhort you alſo to examine, whether in our ſyſtem there be not ſomething wrong—ſome radical and grievous defects—by means of which even our largeſt counties may have forced upon them Repreſentatives, whom wiſe deliberation, and unbiaſſed choice, would not have given them. ——But I will diſmiſs, for the preſent, this humiliating idea; and, taking things as I find them, will proceed in the enquiry now before us.

Now, Gentlemen, whether our Repreſentatives ought, or ought not, to promote the ſpeedy reſtoration of Peace, may be worth conſidering;—whether there are, or are not, any means left to this nation, by which it is poſſible to arreſt in its courſe a devouring Taxation, that threatens to eat up every thing which human exertion can produce;—and, whether our Repreſentatives can, or cannot, aſſiſt towards the attainment of thoſe means, are alſo conſiderations of great importance.

And whether, again, thoſe Repreſentatives ought, or ought not, to ſupport the preſent Mi-

niſters in that ſyſtem of policy, and in thoſe principles of civil government——aye, and of military government too——which, until revived by them, have been unknown in this country ever ſince the expulſion of the *Stuarts*, may alſo be matter for reflection.

On theſe points, however, important as they are, I ſhall not trouble our Candidates with any queſtions, nor you with any obſervation. No; nor will I, at this time, even call on our Candidates to promote a repeal of thoſe ſtatutes which have repealed an invaluable part of the Bill of Rights; eſpecially as I might call in vain; ſince two of them were voting parties in paſſing thoſe ſtatutes; and the third, as I conceive, even ſurpaſſes thoſe two, in his admiration of them.

All thoſe ſubjects I leave to others who may be diſpoſed to bring them forward. They are all—all of far inferior moment to that which preſſes on my mind. My fears are for the very foundations of our political ſyſtem;—for the Conſtitution itſelf; for that Government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*, which has raiſed England, in liberty and happineſs, ſo far above thoſe countries, in which the maſs of the people have no ſhare whatever—*no, not even once in ſeven years*—in chooſing any of thoſe who are to rule over them.

It is, Gentlemen, to the poſſeſſion of the great, the invaluable right of *Election*—that right which at this moment we are exerciſing—that we owe every bleſſing and pre-eminence we enjoy over the wretched ſubjects of *Spain*, of *Pruſſia*, and of *Bohemia*.—So far they reſemble us, Gentlemen; as each of thoſe nations has in its government a *King* and *Lords*; but having, alas! *no Commons*, no Repreſentatives elected by the people, they are miſerable ſlaves;—they are very cattle. If you would avoid their fate, take care to preſerve inviolate your own peculiar part of the Engliſh Conſtitution. If you would not yourſelves degenerate into *cattle*, take care that your Conſtitution do not degenerate into a government of *King* and *Lords* only; or, if poſſible, into ſomething ſtill worſe.

Tell your Repreſentatives you ſhall expect that, at the expiration of their ſervice, they ſhall leave you in full poſſeſſion of the *Rights of Engliſhmen*, and of an *unadulterated* Engliſh Conſtitution.—And now call on thoſe who aſpire to the honour of that ſituation for *their* ideas of *thoſe rights*, and *their* interpretation of *that Conſtitution*. It is fit that, on theſe two points, you ſhould know whether, or not, their notions and your's are alike. On that very circumſtance, preciſely, depends their fitneſs, or unfitneſs, to be your Repreſentatives.

I ſhall preſently have the honour of ſuggeſting propoſitions, calculated to bring forth this compariſon of opinions; and as I ſhall take eſpecial care to touch on none but very broad principles of the Conſtitution, ſo I truſt there can be found amongſt us no opinion but one. I truſt we ſhall all agree (at leaſt in a general, ſafe, and practical ſenſe) in what we mean, when we ſpeak of a government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*. And I am ſure we ought not to elect any for our Repreſentatives who will not engage honeſtly to repel all attacks on that government, on which branch of it ſoever ſuch attacks may be made, and from what quarter ſoever thoſe attacks may come.

In this part of the duty of our Repreſentatives they will moſt aſſuredly find ſome employment; for we have evidence ſufficient, that already has our Conſtitution—already has our government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons* been ferioufly attacked, and brought into danger—into great and imminent danger! ——Into *danger* did I only ſay?—— The word "*danger*," believe me, Gentlemen, ſtrong as it may ſound in your ears, is far too feeble to expreſs my apprehenſions.

What is our real ſituation, as men claiming the benefits of that government, of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*; or, in other words, what is the real ſituation of that government itſelf, it is moſt fit, Gentlemen,

Gentlemen, you ſhould know; becauſe your political liberty, becauſe the political liberty of the whole nation, is involved in the queſtion. Ought we not, then, on this queſtion, to aſk the ſentiments of our Candidates, before we make them our Repreſentatives?

I repeat it, Gentlemen, that your Conſtitution is in imminent danger. You ſhall not need to aſk me for the proof. Before I ſit down it ſhall be laid before you. But, in ſo doing, you ſhall have no picture of my drawing—you ſhall have no facts of my ſtating, in explanation of what I mean, and expreſſive of what I feel. You ſhall have higher authority—you ſhall have the higheſt authority in this country—*the Journals of the Houſe of Commons.*

There, Gentlemen, you will find a document, containing both a picture and an analyſis of the Britiſh Commons. I have that document now in my hand. It will ſoon ſhew you, that it is high time we ceaſed fretting ourſelves about diſtinctions between miniſters in *red capes*, or *buff waiſtcoats*; that is, whether our rulers ſhall be Pittites or Foxites; of this party, or of that.

It will ſoon diſcover to you the cauſe and the drift of thoſe arts which have been ſo ſucceſsfully played off, to divert you from attending to your true danger, and from diſcovering your real ene-

mies; I mean your *domeſtic enemies*; againſt whom I will throw out no baſe *inſinuations*, no infamous *calumnies*; but I will ſet before your eyes their very DEEDS.

Here, Gentlemen, is matter, both for your own ſerious attention, and that of thoſe into whoſe hands you are about to commit your liberties. It is on the ſubject I ſhall bring before you, that, in the preſent critical ſituation of this country, your candidates may pre-eminently ſhew, whether or not they are worthy of ſo ſacred a truſt.

Were we ſeeking men to attend merely to the progreſs of bills for turnpikes, incloſures, or drainages, we need not, ſurely, come to ſuch a meeting as this.—We are not now looking for the qualities that are to be found in every country Attorney. At a moment of ſingular importance to *Britiſh intereſts*, we are ſeeking Legiſlators and Stateſmen; at a moment perilous in the extreme to *Britiſh liberty*, we are ſeeking enlightened and ſtrong-minded men, competent to underſtand in what political liberty conſiſts, and determined at all hazards to prove themſelves its defenders.

The document in my hand, Gentlemen, I have ſaid, contains both a picture and an analyſis of the Britiſh Commons. The picture ſhews what a Houſe of Commons *ought to be*: the analyſis, *what*

the late House was, and what the next must be. Look, Gentlemen, at the picture, and your English hearts will glow with exultation and delight; turn to the analysis, and your blood by turns will thrill with horror, and boil with indignation.

Contemplate the picture; and you will behold the British Commons in beauty, health and vigour, adorned with emblems of liberty, peace, and prosperity;—turn to the analysis, and under a venerable antique robe of FORM—a robe for which it is chiefly indebted to the counties and cities,—you will discover a cadaverous carcass, crippled by mutilation, offensive with disease. Its face, indeed, and its general exterior, are fair to look on; but, to use the words of one who was not ashamed to be thought a reformer, "it is like unto whited "sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, "and of all uncleanness."

II. Now, Gentlemen, for fear of trespassing too long on your time, I will only call your attention to *two* facts, taken from an hundred highly important ones in my document; upon which two facts I shall ground propositions, calculated to shew at once the sense of this meeting to our Candidates; and the sentiments of our Candidates to this meeting; which I think, as far as it can be practised, a much pleasanter way of coming at those

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Gentlemen's opinions, than by catechiſing them on their political creed, in the face of the aſſembled county.

The propoſitions I have prepared are the more neceſſary, becauſe doctrines tending to ſubvert from its foundations a government of which a Houſe of Commons is a vital part, are induſtriouſly circulated by men in office—by men in the pay and patronage of Miniſters. One of theſe *placemen*,—and he is the very man, Gentlemen,—the very man who ſet on foot the firſt aſſociation in ſupport of a government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*—this very man has publiſhed a book, in which we are told, that *from the goodly tree of monarchy both Houſes of Parliament, as uneſſential branches, may be lopped off—lopped off*, Gentlemen, *and caſt into the fire, without deſtroying our Conſtitution.* What think you of this, my friends, from a placeman under Mr. *Pitt*; from a Chief Juſtice of a Britiſh Court of Judicature *!

* "In fine, the conſtitution of England is a *Monarchy*; the "Monarch is the ancient ſtock from which have ſprung thoſe "goodly branches of the Legiſlature, the *Lords* and *Commons*, that "at the ſame time give ornament to the tree, and afford ſhelter to "thoſe who ſeek protection under it. But thoſe are ſtill only "branches, and derive their origin and nutriment from their "common parent; they may be lopped off and the tree is a tree "ſtill, ſhorn indeed of its honours, but not like them caſt into the "fire."—*Reeves's Thoughts on the Engliſh Government, addreſſed to the good Senſe of the People of England.*

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The other placeman tells you, *the Houſe of Commons* "*never did repreſent the people* *," *and that its excellence conſiſts in* NOT *repreſenting them* †. Are we, then, called on by the King's writs to ſend Repreſentatives to a Houſe of Parliament, the excellence of which is to conſiſt in *not* repreſenting us!

Here, Gentlemen, I muſt put a queſtion to each of our Candidates. I will begin with "*the ſupporter of a ſtrong and ſteady government.*" I will aſk him, upon his honour, if he has never, directly nor indirectly, neither perſonally nor by agents, nor by ſubſcriptions, circulated the book in which theſe poſitions reſpecting the Houſe of Commons are maintained?—It is a book much in eſteem, and much circulated by the aſſociations for ſupporting a conſtitution of *King*, *Lords*, and COMMONS, and by the friends of the preſent Miniſters—thoſe Miniſters who are the patrons and paymaſters of its author!

And, as this book has made many *alarmiſts*, I muſt alſo aſk our other two Candidates, whether,

* See *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 200.

† "The proſperity and happineſs we have enjoyed for a cen-"tury, and never ſo great as at preſent, is owing preciſely to the "Houſe of Commons NOT ſpeaking the will of the people."—Ib. p. 94.

In another place, p. 89. he ſays, "Once choſen by the few, "they *repreſent* the many." Now whether the people are *repreſented* in a Houſe they do not chooſe, or *miſrepreſented* by a Houſe that does not ſpeak their will, the reader muſt determine for himſelf.

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in their panic, they ever cauſed its circulation *? Or whether it was advice laviſhly given in that book, which cauſed their falling into the inſidious ſnares of *Lord Grenville* and *Mr. Pitt*, ſo far as to forget for a time the *Bill of Rights*, and the Revolution in favour of our freedom, which gave birth to that Bill.

If, my brother Freeholders, we mean to become mere cattle on the fields we now cultivate, we ſhall ſuffer the doctrines I have quoted—doctrines ſtriking at the very eſſence of our liberties—to go abroad uncontradicted, to ſpread their infection far and wide, particularly amongſt thoſe who are pleaſed to diſtinguiſh themſelves as the only true *ſupporters of government*;—a very convenient cloak, as you ſhall ſoon ſee, for many who are but too induſtrious, and too ſucceſsful, in undermining that particular branch of our government on which all our liberties depend.

With regard to our Candidates, the propoſitions I ſhall ſubmit to you will give *them* an opportunity of ſhewing what *ſort* of government they reſpectively mean to ſupport, and *us* an opportunity

* Theſe paſſages are not left for the purpoſe of inſinuating that any of the Candidates did circulate the book in queſtion, as the author has no other ground whatever for ſuch a ſuppoſition than what he openly expreſſes.

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of judging which of thoſe Candidates ought to have our ſupport.

As an individual Freeholder, I come here perfectly diſengaged, to ſeek conſtitutional Repreſentatives or none. I have no fox-hunting vote to beſtow on any one; neither have I a vote for party, nor for connection; no, nor even for ſacred friendſhip. To my friend I will give my purſe, my hand, my heart; but I will not give him that which is not mine. My vote I hold in truſt; my vote belongs to my country, and my country alone ſhall have it *.

* It was matter of ſome amuſement to obſerve the aukward ſituations into which thoſe gentlemen were thrown, who had to recommend *two* Candidates of *oppoſite* parties in politics. How a ſpeaker in ſuch a ſituation is to impreſs upon his audience thoſe political principles which alone ought to direct their choice of repreſentatives, I know not. It is a dilemma that grows out of a wrong ſyſtem, requiring *one* elective body to chooſe *two* repreſentatives; and nothing is more common throughout the kingdom, than for counties to be repreſented by two ſuch oppoſite Members, by which means ſuch counties are, as it were, blotted out in the national repreſentation, where the vote of one Member has no other effect than to deſtroy that of his colleague.

Another curious contradiction growing out of the ſame ſyſtem is, that a Candidate may have a majority of *Electors* to vote for him, and yet loſe his election; becauſe there may be a majority of *votes* againſt him. If the Engliſh nation were ſtudious of not becoming a juſt object of ridicule to the enlightened part of mankind, ſuch groſs defects as theſe, inſignificant as they may appear to ſome, would be carefully corrected.

But I fear, Gentlemen, I detain you too long. You have great goodneſs in being ſo patient with me: but in times like theſe, the burthened heart has but too much to pour out. I will proceed with what diſpatch I can.

The document, to which I have more than once alluded, comes from the Journals of the Houſe of Commons, on the 6th day of May, 1793. I will now produce my facts. Some one here may perhaps deny their being *facts*, and call them only *aſſertions*. If ſuch an objection ſhould be ſtarted, this is my reply. They were aſſertions made in the face of the Houſe, by men who *affirmed that that Houſe was not an adequate repreſentation of the people*; they were aſſertions which deeply touched the Houſe's honour;—in ſhort they were aſſertions which, had not that Houſe felt inward ſhame and conviction, muſt have been contradicted:—but contradicted they were not.

Beſides the two facts which I mean to produce to you, this paper contains ſuch a catalogue of wrongs done the people; ſuch a maſs of folly and abſurdity with which the people are needleſsly inſulted in the mode of doing the wrong, and ſuch a narrative of venality, corruption, and chicane, for utterly rooting out our national repreſentation, and with it all our liberties, as, I preſume, never before was penned. The Houſe, abaſhed and confounded, heard

heard it all; and it ſuffered in ſilence its own ſhame to be entered on it own journals. There, Gentlemen, the document ſtands, a record of iniquity, which that Houſe had neither the boldneſs to deny, nor the virtue to reform.

Nay, Gentlemen, had not the facts I have to produce to you been true; or had not the exact truth, whatever it might be, been perfectly tantamount to the aſſertions, the men who dared to ſet their names to this paper would undoubtedly have gone to Newgate.

Had that Houſe had any decent pretenſions to call itſelf one branch of a government of *King*, *Lords*, and COMMONS, this paper would have been a malicious, a falſe, a ſcandalous, and an infamous libel. But as, on the contrary, this honeſt paper ſpoke the truth, then that Houſe itſelf was *the libel* —it was a practical, permanent untruth:—purporting to be the Repreſentative of the Commons of Great Britain, it was for the greater part, as I will prove to you, the Repreſentative, *the Creature, of the moſt deadly enemies to thoſe Commons, that, in all their ſtruggles for liberty, they have ever had to deal with.*

My firſt fact, then, is as follows; although it contain two diſtinct parts, I ſtate it but as one fact. —It was ſaid, and upon evidence that was offered

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at the bar of the Houſe, that FORTY PEERS, by their own poſitive authority, return *eighty-one* members to that Houſe. Evidence was alſo offered at the bar, to ſhew why it was to be believed, on credible teſtimony, " that no leſs than *one hundred and* " *fifty* of its members owe their elections entirely " to the interference of Peers."——Of PEERS, Gentlemen;—LORDS OF PARLIAMENT;—in whom it is as great a crime, and as complete *a ſubverſion* of the Conſtitution, to drive the Commons from their own Houſe, as to drive the King from his throne. What would have been the fate of Mr. *Hardy*, or of Mr. *Tooke*, had an overt act, of ſo criminal a nature as this which I have ſtated, been proved upon either of them? Inſtead of ouſting the Lords by wholeſale, inſtead of expelling from Parliament *one hundred and fifty* of them at a ſtroke, had they been convicted of conſpiring to have torn down and excluded from his ſeat but a ſingle Peer, would not an ignominious death have been their portion?*

Lord

* Neither of the facts produced in this Speech can be called *new matter*. So much the worſe. If none but new matter of *complaint* could be produced, our danger would not lie deep; and then, indeed, none but new matter of *argument* would be wanted. But that the public ſhould need *ſuch* facts to be more than once ſtated, is one of the worſt of our ſymptoms. The author aimed not at amuſing his hearers with pleaſant novelties, but to arouſe them to the neceſſary contemplation of unpleaſant truths. He aimed not at confounding and irritating, by a long enumeration of inferior grievances, but, by reiterated appeals, to fix the attention on the grand

Lord Chief Juſtice Eyre, in his charge on the State Trials, in 1794, laid it down as law, that " a force upon the Parliament muſt be immediate- " ly directed againſt the King, who is an integral " part of it; *it muſt reach the King*, or it can have " no effect at all." He conſidered ſuch *force*, if proved, as " a caſe of no difficulty; that it would " be the cleareſt high treaſon." Now we will leave it to the Attorney and Solicitor General, and other gentlemen of the long robe, to determine, how far the thruſting from their ſeats *one hundred and fifty* Repreſentatives of the Commons, by the *Peers* we have ſpoken of, is, in contemplation of law, putting " a force upon Parliament."

And we will likewiſe leave it to the ſame learned body to explain to us the different degrees of criminality, between " enthuſiaſtically honeſt men, " lovers of their country, loyal to their prince, " but eagerly bent upon ſome ſpeculative improve- " ment in the frame and internal mechaniſm of the

grand ones, which have cauſed all the reſt. The people have been artfully drawn into a political labyrinth, in which they and their liberties are likely to be loſt; and it was his aim to ſhew them a ſhort way out. It is the conſtant artifice of the enemies of the people to render all that relates to government complicated, intricate, and myſterious, ſo that it may not be comprehended; it is the buſineſs of their friends to exhibit thoſe ſimple truths which are the teſts of all practice; ſo that it may be perfectly underſtood whether the government be, or be not, adminiſtered agreeably to the Conſtitution, and conſiſtently with the principles of Freedom.

" government,"* who ſhould merely form " the " *project* of a Convention, having for its object the " collecting together a power which ſhould over- " awe the legiſlature, and extort *a parliamentary* " *reform* from it;"* let them explain to us, I ſay, the different degrees of criminality, between *ſuch* men forming *ſuch* project, and *Peers of the Realm*, who *have forced* upon the Houſe of Commons *one hundred and fifty* of their own creatures, to uſurp the ſeats of Repreſentatives of the People; whether *to prevent a Parliamentary Reform*, or for any other purpoſe whatever, is no matter.

And will you, Gentlemen, ſend Repreſentatives to a mutilated Parliament, to wink at enormities like theſe?—to ſuffer unprincipled uſurpers to render your government of *King*, *Lords*, and COMMONS an object of deriſion and contempt; and that branch of it, in particular, intended to be the palladium of your liberties, a foul engine of the direſt oppreſſion? Don't be ſurpriſed, Gentlemen, after this, and more which is coming, to hear it ſaid, that the people of England have neither Liberty nor Conſtitution left.

Here, my friends, obſerve, that at the commencement of every Seſſion of Parliament, this tender-conſcienced, this independent Houſe, re-

* *See the Chief Juſtice's Charge.*

gularly

gularly votes—aye, and with perfect unanimity—
" that it is a high infringement upon the liberties
" and privileges of the Commons of Great Britain,
" for any *Lord of Parliament*, or any *Lord Lieute-*
" *nant* of any County, to *concern themſelves* in
" elections of Members to ſerve for the Commons
" in Parliament."

Now, by the way, if my eyes have not deceived me, we have ſome of theſe *Lords of Parliament*, and who, let me tell you, are *Lords of Boroughs* too, hovering about this very meeting. If they do not " *concern themſelves*" with buſineſs which does not belong to them, why grate the feelings of independent-minded men, by ſo improperly honouring us with their preſence *here?* If they do " *concern themſelves in elections of Members to ſerve* " *for the Commons in Parliament*," let them not inſult one of the largeſt counties in the kingdom with their proud conſequence; but content themſelves with lording it over their dirty Boroughs.

But, to return to the point I was upon, if the Houſe of Commons was what it ought to be, would it not, inſtead of voting ſuch hypocriſy as I have quoted, vote ſome ſtrong cenſure againſt thoſe *Peers*, who, not content with their own large ſhare of the government, felonioufly and traiterouſly

invade that which excluſively belongs to the Commons?

Who, amongſt the Commons, let me aſk you, Gentlemen, have thruſt from his proper ſeat in the Houſe of Peers a ſingle *Lord?* Why will not theſe meddling *Lords* leave the Houſe of Commons in the hands of thoſe to whom it belongs? Why are *one hundred and fifty* of its ſeats to be ſurrendered to the Deputies of theſe proud ones! who, whenever they can ſpare time from the duties of the chace, or the important concerns of the opera, or the labours of faſhionable life, have parliamentary ſeats of their own, which muſt remain empty if not filled by themſelves! If Deputies they muſt have, there let thoſe Deputies ſit.

Surely, Gentlemen, the ſhare in our government which properly belongs to the *Lords* is enough for them! They do not amount to three hundred perſons; and yet they have one entire third part of the legiſlature to themſelves. This is as much as falls to the ſhare of *ten millions* of their fellow ſubjects, from whom Heaven has not diſtinguiſhed them as ſuperior beings by any ſuperiority of aſpect or intellect. And beſides this, they have much more:—to their legiſlative functions they unite the higheſt judicial authority of the State; and their perſons are loaded with dignities and privileges!

For

For theſe few men—men not ſelected for experience in affairs, nor talents, nor public virtue—but born——born, Gentlemen, to all this; and, as Mr. *Burke* ſays, " ſwaddled, and rocked, and " dandled into legiſlators,"*—ſuch a ſhare of ſolid power and ſplendid honours as the Conſtitution gives them, will ſurely be thought amply ſufficient!

And are not theſe the very men, my Brother-Freeholders, who tell their tenants they muſt either *turn out* as cavalry, in defence of theſe their uſurpations upon our rights and liberties, or they muſt *turn out* of their farms! They do not, indeed, thus expreſs themſelves in *words*; for the true meaning is kept out of ſight, by being wrapped up in the hocus-pocus phraze of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*; but when *Borough-holding* Lords arm their tenants to defend the *Government*, their meaning is ſufficiently plain.

If men, under ſuch a weight of obligation to the Conſtitution as the Peers, are the firſt to become its *domeſtic enemies*, and to plant their daggers in its boſom, where, alas! ſhall it find protectors!—— Let us ſeek them this day;—let us ſhew our love to the Conſtitution, by chooſing thoſe only, who love it like ourſelves. If we can find men who are

* See his Letter to a noble Lord, concerning the *Duke of Bedford*.

duly ſenſible of the danger to which our liberties are expoſed, we may hope that, by wiſe and upright counſels, it may be averted.

Should you want, my friends, for any legiſlative purpoſes, to inquire after any of the Nobles implicated in the lordly practices I have mentioned, it might be in vain to direct you to their own Houſe of Parliament; for there, I confeſs, they are ſeldom to be ſeen or heard of; but you may be ſure to find them perched within ken of a borough town, like crows over their carrion. Perhaps you might hear of ſome of them at *Stamford*, or at *Grantham*, or at *Grimſby*; and in your way you may as well inquire at *Boſton* alſo.

But it is time I returned to my document, and produced my ſecond fact. Such, Gentlemen, has been the gradual effect of decay and encroachment, and ſuch the dreadful conſequences of noblemen and nabobs buying up the boroughs, that the popular repreſentation of all the counties and cities and great towns in the kingdom put together, is now in effect completely ANNIHILATED. All this vaſt population, all this property, all this intereſt, in ſhort, the nation itſelf, weighed in the balance againſt the rotten boroughs, is found wanting! The fact upon which this obſervation is grounded is this; that, including the uſurpation of the *Peers* already mentioned, ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-

FIFTY-FOUR individuals, as my document ſtates, return *a decided majority of the Houſe of Commons* * : or, in other words, *one hundred and fifty-four of your fellow ſubjects*, a much ſmaller number of perſons than now hear me ſpeak, have ſeized to themſelves a power which, in any other hands than thoſe of Repreſentatives truly and fairly choſen by the whole nation, is, both in eſſence and effect, a tyranny.

What is it which ſtamps upon a Parliament its character—but *its majority?*—Where reſides the power of Parliament—but in *its majority?*—Who in Parliament have the diſpoſal of the national purſe—but *the majority?*

If *the majority*, then, of your Houſe of Commons be appointed as I have ſtated, and if the appointers hold this power by inheritance, as you hold your freeholds, I call on you, my friends, by the duty you owe your country, by the duty you owe yourſelves and your poſterity, to lay your hands on your hearts, and ſay upon your honour, if ſuch an aſſembly ought to be called *the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled!*

* They return *three hundred and ſeven* Members, or *a majority of fifty ſix*. How oft is the Houſe counted out, and obliged to adjourn important buſineſs, for want of *forty* Members being preſent!

I aſk you if this could be the meaning of *Blackſtone*, when in his Commentaries he ſays, "a "branch, at leaſt, of the legiſlature ſhould reſide "in the whole body of the people * !"

And again, I call on you, as honeſt men, and I call on our Candidates, as men knowing our Conſtitution, to ſay, whether with ſuch a repreſentation—if repreſentation it can be called which has loſt the uſes of repreſentation, and ſcarcely retains a principle or quality of that character—if repreſentation it can be called which is all fiction, ſhadow, and moonſhine—I call on you to ſay, whether we are in poſſeſſion of a government of *King*, *Lords*, and COMMONS! I call upon you, and upon them, to ſay, if a majority of a Houſe of Commons—not *choſen*, Gentlemen, but *appointed* as you have heard, are any more the Repreſentatives of the people of *Great Britain*, than they are of the people of *Japan!*

You are not, it is true, deprived of your county elections; nor is it intended you ſhould be. They anſwer to your ſagacious maſters the moſt convenient purpoſes. While ſuch elections are ineffectual to curb *them*, they ſerve to amuſe *you*. If political toys and rattles will divert you from obſerving your own helpleſs condition, or from being uneaſy

* Vol. I. p. 158.

at

at the rod that is ever ready to chaſtiſe you, why deny you ſuch paternal indulgence! It is from theſe political play-games, theſe petty conteſts once in ſeven long years, that you obtain thoſe erroneous ideas of freedom that ſatisfy you, alas! but too well, while they are mere ſhadows without ſubſtance; and your rulers will be the laſt to undeceive you!—It is in theſe paltry provincial ſtruggles that you feel a certain will of your own, a certain perſonal importance, which you ſadly miſtake for *political liberty*. The error is not unnatural; but ſtill it is an error, an error leading directly and ſhorly to perdition.

Political liberty is not a mere *perſonal*, but a ſocial condition. The *community* muſt be politically free; or the *individual* cannot. He may perſonally have votes for two, or for twenty Repreſentatives in Parliament; but if the elective franchiſe be not ſo diffuſed, and ſo equally divided as to give his *country* freedom, *politically free* he cannot be. If the whole country be bought and ſold by the *one hundred and fifty-four*, what avail our county elections!

III. Here let me turn to you, Gentlemen, in particular, who are not merely freeholders, but whoſe eſtates and education give you a higher ſituation in this country. Reflect, I beſeech you, on the condition of your Houſe of Commons! Ponder on the facts I have laid before you!—Anticipate the

the conſequences of thoſe facts if left to their *natural*, their *neceſſary* operation; and conſider whether we ought not to interpoſe with *other* cauſes, to produce other effects!

You know what *did* come to paſs in the *Roman State*, while yet it had a government *in its ancient free forms* of *Conſuls*, *Tribunes*, and *Senate*; and you know what *may* come to paſs in *England*, while yet ſhe may retain, *in form*, a government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*. You know that the deſtruction of the Roman Conſtitution was effected, when an EMPEROR, ſupported by the *Legions*, found the means to make *Conſuls*, *Tribunes*, and *Senate* bow before him. You know that the deſtruction of the Engliſh conſtitution cannot be far off, when a DICTATOR, in the ſhape of a PRIME MINISTER, ſupported by the *Borough-holders*, ſhall have the ſame power over *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*.

The overthrow of the Roman conſtitution was the ruin of liberty, the extinction of glory, the end of proſperity. Will the liberty, the glory, the proſperity of *England* remain, when her Conſtitution is no more?—Arreſt, then, the progreſs of corruption, ere it lay low all the honours of your country;—ere Engliſhmen degenerate into a herd of trembling ſlaves, and it be the higheſt criminality in a *Gentleman* to manifeſt a ſpirit of independence.

Demand

Demand of your Candidates a full explanation of their ſentiments touching thoſe high concerns; and of their views in ſeeking ſeats in Parliament. I have heard it ſtated as *not objectionable*, that a Repreſentative of the People ſhould go into the Houſe of Commons with a future ſeat amongſt the Lords full in his eye. If the *people* had the power of rewarding faithful ſervice with ſuch promotion, there would be no objection; but when you have ſeen, eſpecially under the preſent Miniſter, ſo many raiſed to the Houſe of Lords, for betraying their truſt while amongſt the Commons, you cannot think any man with ſuch views a fit guardian of your rights and liberties. Conſidering the ſtuff of which Lords are now made, a Miniſter can find it any where and every where; but ſtuff fit for the compoſition of an enlightened and independent county Member, is not to be found ſo eaſily, and we cannot beſtow too much pains in ſeeking it.

I touched juſt now on a compariſon between the fate of *England* and of *Rome*. It ſtill dwells upon my mind. I ſee in my imagination the ſame ſcenes about to be acted here, if not prevented, as were acted in that unhappy country when its liberties were loſt. I ſee the ſame vices actuating our rulers, as actuated thoſe *domeſtic*, thoſe internal enemies, who ſubdued the proud miſtreſs of the world: but I hope I ſee a better ſpirit amongſt *Engliſh Gentlemen*,

men, than was then to be ſeen amongſt the Roman Patricians.

Are you—the deſcendants of ancient Engliſh families—prepared to become, either the miſguided ſupporters, or the certain victims of a government of *corruption and the ſword?*—Look to the *boroughs* and the *barracks*, and you may ſee "the ſtrong and "ſteady government" that is preparing for you.

After the Roman conſtitution was deſtroyed, you know in what the government of *Tiberius*, of *Caligula*, and of *Nero* was ſtrong; you know in what it was ſteady. It was ſtrong in its *legions*, but ſtill more ſtrong in *the baſeneſs of* the *Senate, and of men of ſenatorian rank.* And ſteady was it, indeed, in utterly extinguiſhing the remaining ſparks of liberty, and *cutting off, one by one, every Roman Gentleman in whom could be diſcovered a particle of the antient virtue.*

The ſervile, indeed, had ſafety, and the eminently wicked roſe to power; but he who, in thoſe diſaſtrous days, did but even ſtand erect in ſilent ſorrowing virtue, was ſure to be taken off by poiſon, by the lancet, or by the hands of the centurions—thoſe military ruffians, whom it was in uſe with the Emperors to employ on ſuch ſervices.—While a virtuous man ſurvives no tyrant thinks himſelf ſecure.

So numerous were the butcheries of ſuch men, that, ſpeaking of the hiſtorians of the times, *Tacitus* ſays, " The writer ſunk under the weight of his " materials, and, feeling himſelf oppreſſed with the " repetition of tragic events, was unwilling to fa- " tigue his readers with the uniformity of blood and " horror *."

You have been alarmed, I know, at the fate of *the Nobleſſe* † *of France*; avoid then their errors. Thoſe Nobleſſe, like the degenerate Romans, had firſt made themſelves the inſtruments to undermine and deſtroy the Conſtitution of their country, and for ſeveral ages the ſame Nobleſſe afterwards continued the mean and tyrannical ſupporters of " a " ſtrong and ſteady government," a mighty military deſpotiſm--cruſhing twenty-five millions of people with its innumerable oppreſſions; and they trampled on their fellow ſubjects with that inſolence which is peculiar to thoſe worſt of tyrants, thoſe who are themſelves ſlaves.

But where, now, are thoſe proud ones? A day of terrible vengeance hath overtaken them. " They " are brought down and fallen ‡!" " The ſpoiler " ceaſeth, the oppreſſors are conſumed out of the

* *Murphy's Tranſlation* I. 380. See alſo Appendix I. p. 61.

† The word *Nobleſſe*, in that country, included what in this we call *Nobility and Gentry*.

‡ Iſ. xx. 8.

" land."

"land*." Good God! what an awful, what an inſtructive event! The moſt numerous Nobleſſe, ſupported by the moſt numerous army of Europe, ſwept as it were in an inſtant from the earth!—O Liberty! O Beneficence! O Juſtice! how ought ye at this eventful moment to be cheriſhed by *the Engliſh Gentleman*, who wiſhes to tranſmit a ſecure property to an honoured poſterity!

Having, as *Engliſh Gentlemen*, nothing in common with the *French Nobleſſe*, where is to you, in their fate, the cauſe of alarm?—Having all things in common with *the Engliſh people*, alarmed, indeed, you ought to be, when their Legiſlative Repreſentation, their and your only ſhield againſt ſuch a deſpotiſm as that of *Rome* under the *Cæſars*, or that of *France* under the *Capets*, is torn from them!—Your true cauſe of alarm, then, is not any thing which is *meditated* againſt you by men in *low* ſituations; for you have made none ſuch your enemies; but that which has been *actually accompliſhed*, in hoſtility to your freedom by men in *high* ones.—Let us think, Gentlemen, for ourſelves! Let us diſdain to be the dupes of crafty men, who, while they court and flatter and alarm us, are all the while forging and rivetting our chains!

IV. We cannot, perhaps, penetrate all the bloody myſteries of *Pilnitz*; we need not affect to dive

* Iſaiah xvi. 4.

into

into the ſecret counſels of the Cabinet of St. James's; but we ought to know ſomewhat of the open conduct of that Cabinet towards ourſelves; we ought to know ſomewhat of the conduct of the late Houſe of Commons; we ought to know how it was conſtructed, and whom it repreſented; we ought to know, that "its ſeats were rented and ſold "like ſtalls for cattle in a fair*."

And ought we not, as Engliſh Gentlemen, to know whether the Conſtitution of our country does, or does not, exiſt? Ought we not to know whether any Peer of this realm, who dares to poſſeſs himſelf of a ſingle ſeat in your Houſe of Commons, ought, or ought not, to be puniſhed?—And ought we not to know, whether, when a decided majority of the ſeats in that Houſe are come to be a private patrimony to an audacious faction of *one hundred and fifty-four* men, it is, or it is not, the duty of all honeſt men to unite for obtaining a reform of ſo intolerable a grievance?

I ſhall hope, ere long, there may be found in this country, men of weight and conſideration,—men who underſtand and revere the Engliſh Conſtitution,—and men, to whom the remembrance of Runnemede and the Revolution, Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, is dear—to call us together

* See Mr. Tooke's Petition to the Houſe of Commons, 1791.

for

for conſideration of theſe our grievous wrongs, and for legally ſeeking conſtitutional redreſs!

But here, again, my mind is recalled to the alarms of the day;—alarms, which ſtrikingly exemplify an old remark, that no one is more liable to run *into* danger, than he who, under the influence of a *panic*, is endeavouring to get *out* of one. Safety is not found in panic fear, nor in raſh enterprize; neither is it the fruit of blind confidence; but it reſults from a happy union of vigilance, ſerenity, prudence, and intrepidity—to diſcern, to eſtimate, and to oppoſe danger.

Let me once more, Gentlemen, draw your attention for a moment to an object which others, with other views, have ſo frequently ſet before you. ——If chateaus in *France* have been burnt, and their proprietors ſacrificed to the fury of an enſlaved and miſerable tenantry, you know, that where a tenantry are free and happy, no ſuch event ever did, no ſuch event ever can, take place; for a free and happy tenantry are to a proprietor of lands as children to an affectionate parent:——— "happy is the man that hath his quiver full of "them: they ſhall not be aſhamed; but they ſhall "ſpeak with the enemies in the gate!"

But there is another *danger* that has been held out to alarm, and to deter men of fortune from aiding

aiding to reform our Repreſentation,—the danger of *proſcription.* Now proſcription in *France*, like proſcription in *Rome*, you will pleaſe to remember, came not from the giddy multitude, came not from *the poor againſt the rich*; but from THE MIGHTY ONES, the OVERGROWN LEADERS OF FACTIONS, aiming to ſubdue both rich and poor, or from thoſe eſtabliſhed Tyrants *who had already ſubdued them.*

Auguſtus, *Anthony*, and *Lepidus*, were potent leaders of factions, each aiming at the ſovereign power. At firſt co-partners in the trade of aſſaſſination, and afterwards the bloody hunters of each other. *Robeſpierre* and his faction played the ſame tragic game, but with a different iſſue. The Roman people being utterly ignorant of the true principles of political liberty; and finding in a Conſtitution, radically bad, no protection, *Auguſtus* at length, ſagacious to ſee how that Conſtitution might be aſſailed, triumphed and became a deſpot. The dark-minded *Robeſpierre*, not duly appreciating the political knowledge of his day and of his country, fell himſelf the final ſacrifice of his own infernal machinations; and the French people have ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing a government, reſting on the baſis of REPRESENTATION—" that happieſt expedient of " political wiſdom."*

* I am not here eſtimating the general value of the Conſtitution of France; nor putting even this part of it to the teſt of true political principles. I only ſtate a general fact. That Conſtitution may have its defects; but it has its excellencies.

In England we have had, as yet, only a foretaſte of that ſpirit of proſcription which actuates thoſe who are aiming at the overthrow of our Conſtitution. But it is ſufficient. *Ex pede Herculem*—the obſtacles were too great to be rapidly ſurmounted. Repeated muſt be the attacks before the fortifications of Repreſentative Freedom can be battered down. But the ſiege continues; the breaches widen; and the *Prætorians* anticipate, with a malignant ſatisfaction, the day of aſſault. In that day—if that day ſhall not be prevented by the virtue of Engliſhmen—thoſe who are found faithfully defending *the Conſtitution* to the laſt, will drink deep, no doubt, of the tender mercies of men who ſhall have murdered Freedom. Proſcription again will ſharpen her dagger; and none will eſcape an honourable grave, but ſuch as ſhall be content with a diſhonoured exiſtence. But, remember, I ſay, once more, that proſcription comes not from the giddy multitude, nor from the poor againſt the rich; but from the MIGHTY ONES!

So much, Gentlemen, has been ſaid about *danger*, and the word has been ſo bandied about, that it is very neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething more about it before I ſit down.———Certain perſons have told us the Conſtitution was ſo much in *danger*, that it was neceſſary for its true friends in all parts of the country to aſſociate in its ſupport; and at the ſame time they told us, alſo, that the *greateſt*

of

of all dangers, was to reform its abuſes and corruptions. This was, to be ſure, rather paradoxical; but, for a moment, we will let it paſs.

But what was *that particular ſpecies of danger* againſt which we were to aſſociate? As the Conſtitution ought to be the grand paramount object of attention to our *Repreſentatives*, it is very material, that we and our Candidates ſhould look back a little to theſe things. What, I aſk, was *that particular ſpecies* of danger? Why, it was this:—That certain evil minded perſons were going to deprive us of our *King*, and of our *Lords*; and ſo ſpoil our good mixed government. And we heard of whole armies of conſpirators, ripe for ruſhing upon us; and whole magazines of treaſon ready to pour out in a moment their dangerous contents: nay, the danger was ſo imminent, that, for ſeveral nights, our Stateſmen and Courtiers, *as they told us*, could not lie down to ſleep, without apprehenſions of having their throats cut ere the morning.

I believe ſuch accounts were gravely ſent into this county, in order to terrify it into Aſſociations, by one whoſe connections gave great weight and authority to the information; and the confuſed noiſe itſelf, which was made by theſe gentry and their numerous echoes, being miſtaken for the inward rumblings of that political *Veſuvius* of which

they affected to ſpeak; great, indeed, was the terror and diſmay that went forth.

Now, conſidering the poſitive language at that time uſed, and the means of intelligence at all times in the hands of miniſters, eſpecially of thoſe who have ſpies and informers in every corner, it was ſcarcely poſſible to doubt of the truth of what was aſſerted; becauſe it was ſcarcely poſſible to conceive, that, without abſolute knowledge and poſitive proof, any could be ſo deſperately wicked, as to diſturb the public tranquillity by ſuch aſſertions.

But who, after all, were *theſe Conſpirators?*—Why, all the men in England aſſociated for obtaining A REFORM IN THE REPRESENTATION.—What was the *Evidence* brought againſt them?—Why, the political principles and reſolutions which THEY HAD IN THEIR OWN NAMES PRINTED IN PAMPHLETS AND NEWSPAPERS; together with ſome of their convivial levity, or folly, if you pleaſe, expreſſed in toaſts and ſongs.*

Who

* One of theſe ſongs was mentioned in evidence againſt *Hardy*, as having been ſung by Mr. Tooke. Had it been mentioned on his own trial, it was his intention to have ſung it to the Jury, in order that they might have diſcovered whether the treaſon it contained was in the words, or in the tune.

It is not at all neceſſary to my argument, to maintain, that all the Reformers have been blameleſs. It would be ſtrange, if, among ſuch numbers, none had wrong intentions, if none had tranſgreſſed

Who were the ſagacious *diſcoverers* of theſe Plots?——Why, MINISTERS; whoſe Spies had been, for two years, members of the Reforming Societies. Who (to borrow a phraſe from *France*) were *the Jury of Accuſation?** ——Why, the ſame MINISTERS, and the BOROUGH-HOLDERS, to be ſure!——formed into a *ſecret committee* of that which, though ſo much *the property of the Peers*, was, by the courteſy of England, (as many *Commoners* are called *Lords*) *called* the *Houſe of Commons*. And who were found *guilty?*——Why, NOBODY; except Mr. Dundas's ſpy; who, for the

tranſgreſſed the law. I think, however, as a body, they are entitled to be tried at the bar of the public, as a perſon charged with being a peace-breaker is ſometimes tried, by a wiſe and juſt magiſtrate. If, upon enquiry, the magiſtrate finds the accuſed perſon was fighting in ſelf-defence, againſt crimps or kipnappers attempting to deprive him of his liberty, he acquits the accuſed, and *puniſhes the original violator of liberty, as the true and real breaker of the peace.*

Perhaps the toaſts, and reſolutions, and letters, which perſons unacquainted with political warfare might moſt condemn, were chiefly ſuch as were intended by way of fineſſe or ſtratagem; and, for aught I know to the contrary, fineſſe and ſtratagem may be as allowable in political as in military warfare. Amongſt the military, all ſuch manœuvres muſt be within the *law of arms*; amongſt politicians, they muſt be within the *law of the land*. I am at leaſt founded in this ſuppoſition by a declaration of Mr. *Tooke*, in his evidence on the trial of Mr. *Thelwall*. "My Lord," ſaid he, "it has always been a rule with me, when I have obſerved men in "high ſituations attempting to get *above the law*, to provoke them "to go *beyond the law*, myſelf keeping *within the law*."

* For a liſt of this *diſintereſted*, this *impartial* Jury, ſee Appendix II. p. 60.

ſake of brewing up a little treaſon, that he might be the better paid for his information, went rather too far: and whom, to prevent the whole drama from being damned, Miniſters took care to hang.

They who have ears to hear, let them hear!—they who have eyes to ſee, let them ſee!—they who have reaſon, or common ſenſe, let them underſtand!

Here, Gentlemen, you can ſcarcely fail to have anticipated me in a few obſervations which have forced themſelves upon my mind. They are theſe:——our Conſtitution, as you have ſeen, has received ſo deep a wound, as to leave us in doubt, whether it do, or do not, at this moment exiſt. A great number of patriotic men unite to ſeek redreſs, and to point out to the public the neceſſity of a ſtill more extended union for accompliſhing their great object. This, by degrees, grows into a *ſerious danger* to the uſurpation of their mock-majeſties the Borough-mongers. They being our real governors, it required but little dexterity to twiſt this danger into a danger to *Government*, properly ſo called; and by a like aſſociation of ideas, and another dexterous perverſion of words, *ſuch* a danger to *ſuch* a Government is twiſted into a danger to the *Conſtitution*. But this ſandy rope of ſophiſtry, I truſt, is now untwiſted.

If

If the deep wound of the Conſtitution was the only *cauſe* which *could*, or which it has ever been pretended *did*, furniſh the patriotic ſocieties with *pretences* for their conduct, or with the *means* of making themſelves dangerous, by the influence it gave them over men's minds,—what, in the name of common ſenſe and morality, were the obvious means of removing this effect, but to remove that which on all hands is allowed to be the cauſe?—— But, no: hold there; that would ſpoil all; that would be to break up the gang; the gang who thrive upon our ruin, and who riot in our ſpoil: that would be to purge the land of this ſwarm of harpy-kings, which the Boroughs have anointed with the oil of corruption, and ſent forth to rule over us. No: rather than remove the cauſe of their own unhallowed power over this degraded land, theſe devourers would remove to *Botany Bay*, or to another world, every honeſt man in the iſland:—rather than adopt "a juſt and neceſſary" reform, they have plunged us into a frantic and impious war, and deluged with human blood the four quarters of this habitable globe!

Good God! what images here ruſh upon the mind! How imagination is on the rack, while *Reform* and *Corruption* are in the conflict! And, alas! how painful to behold, how diſaſtrous to humanity to exiſt, a horrid power in our country capable of turning the ſcale againſt the fair offſpring

of heaven, and of giving the victory to the fouleſt of Hell's foul progeny!

VI. If you have not, my Countrymen, ſearched into this queſtion, I am ſure you yourſelves are too virtuous to believe me, unleſs I produce proof, when I impute to the Borough-holding faction a crime of ſuch enormity, a wickedneſs ſo inexpreſſedly horrid, as ruſhing into the war for the direct purpoſe of preventing *that which ought to be the object of every honeſt man*; and that, *without which not even the providence of God can ſave our Country!*— for the providence of God wills not *effects* without *cauſes*.

For proof of this heavy charge, I refer you to the ſame book which has told us in what the excellence of a Houſe of Commons conſiſts; a book, on which the faction have laviſhed their utmoſt praiſe, and in the circulation of which they have not been ſparing. Pleaſe to attend to the following quotations:

"What are REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED BY "THE GENERAL SUFFRAGE OF A NATION?"*— He puts down this queſtion in capitals, to mark it as a *text* on which he is going to diſcourſe. Now, had it been his buſineſs to have given a candid and

* *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, 101.

rational

rational anſwer, applicable to Britain, he might have ſaid—'In Britiſh America may be found *fif-* 'teen Repreſentative Aſſemblies of this deſcription; 'conferring on the fifteen nations of the Union 'every bleſſing of good government; with *politi-* 'cal liberty in a degree of perfection never before 'attained on earth.' This, I ſay, would have been candid and rational; but ſuch a declaration would have recommended REFORM, which it was the aim of his book to decry, and to quaſh; and would have been inconſiſtent with the horrid impiety of exciting the people to a war, the very object of which was to give the laſt blow to their own liberties, and to ſecure the dominion of the baſeſt faction that ever diſhonoured a nation.

Inſtead, therefore, of turning our attention to *America*, he directs it to *France*—a country in the very paroxiſm of a convulſion, ſuch as never be-before ſhook a great nation;—and, in *his own reply* to his own queſtion, by the aid of an imagination rich in materials for miſrepreſentation, ſcurrility, and invective, he draws ſuch a picture of the Convention as was beſt calculated to divert us from attempting to obtain *Repreſentatives elected by the General Suffrage of the Nation*, or liſtening to our REFORMERS; and then proceeds, again marking another queſtion by capitals, as another text to be diſcourſed on.

"CAN

" CAN SUCH MEN," he aſks, " BE FRIENDS " TO THE PRESENT WAR?* No, aſſuredly. It " blots their proſpects—it brings perdition to their " hopes. Powerfully as they are inſtigated to de- " precate a war—juſt in that degree are all honeſt " men, the friends of law and order, bound to bleſs " the wiſdom of government" [read the Borough-holding faction] " that has awakened to *the danger that threatened us*" [*of having our Repreſentatives choſen as they are in America*] " and taken the effec- " tual means of WAR to ſecure to us our houſes," [read *Boroughs*] " our properties and eſtates," [read *hereditary ſeats in the Houſe of Commons*] " our " laws," [read *the ſeptennial act, &c.*] our religion, " and our lives" [read *any thing that will* ALARM]. " A War in ſuch a cauſe, founded in ſuch motives, " was never before a queſtion in Britain" [nothing more true]. " Will you have a municipality in " your hall, and a pike in your boſom" [*by imitating the wiſdom of America in ſecuring a real Repreſentation in the Houſe of Commons*] " with what ſome " men call peace?—or will you keep French *aſſaſ-* " *ſins* at a diſtance," [who are not coming *near you*]

* The war had commenced when this edition of the work was publiſhed; but the firſt part of it came out in the beginning of September, 1792, juſt after the impriſonment of *the King of France* had furniſhed a pretext, but a moſt abſurd one, for *the people of England* to interfere in the internal regulations of that country, and when every art was to be exerted for working up the public mind to an approbation of war.

" and

" and Engliſh Jacobins [read *Reformers*] amena-
" ble to Engliſh law, by WAR?"*

As the Gentleman at ſo early a period could not venture to ſpeak out, I have been obliged to introduce ſome explanatory words, as our tranſlators of the bible were under a neceſſity of doing when the text was obſcure, or *did not accord with the Engliſh idiom*; and on the ſame principles as inuendoes are filled up in our courts of law. You, Gentlemen, are the Jury, conſcientiouſly to decide, whether my inferences are natural and fair.

When the author thus recommended War, he had only written one hundred pages of his book; but by the time he writes an hundred more, he is ſo warmed by his ſubject, and ſo ſelf-ſatisfied of being unanſwerable, that he is leſs reſerved, as you ſhall now hear. " What," ſays he, " was *the ob-*
" *ject of the War?* Let this point be aſcertained
" clearly in every rational mind, for it is the polar
" ſtar that can alone guide us through the confuſion
" of arguments with which Jacobin oratory entan-
" gles the queſtion, for the deception of the peo-
" ple. That object was *the Preſervation of the*
" *Britiſh Conſtitution* againſt the *attacks*—avowed
" or concealed—open or inſidious—by cannon in

* *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, 102.

" Flanders,

" Flanders, or by Jacobin Clubs in *England*—of " *French principles.*"

Now what is meant, in this paſſage, by " Britiſh " Conſtitution—attacks"—and " *French princi-* " *ples?*"

The author ſhall explain himſelf. " The Houſe " of Commons," ſays he, " was not created by the " People, but by the Crown; never did repreſent " the People in any period of our hiſtory; and is " not reſponſible to the People.

" If the nature of ſuch an aſſembly demands to " be corrupted, in order to purſue the public good, " who but a viſionary can wiſh to remove corrup- " tion?"——So much for his Conſtitution. This, I preſume is enough. Obſerve again:—" Mode- " rate Reform, or any Reform at all on principle, " is a *ſure ſtep* to all that followed Reform in " *France.*"

Obſerve, Gentlemen, this logical concluſion.— " In *England*, where the curſes of a direct monarchi- " cal deſpotiſm have never exiſted, to make us *re-* " *volt at the name of King*; where our noblemen, " reſtrained by the nature of our government, have " never impreſſed upon the minds of the people " *a horror and deteſtation of nobility*; and where, in " fact, a government of King, Lords, and Com- " mons,

" mons, is an object of even *ſuperſtitious attachment*; " we muſt not venture to reform our Repreſenta- " tion, ſo as *to ſecure the continuance of ſuch attach-* " *ment*, and to obtain the ſame ſolid benefits from " Repreſentation as the American States *always had* " *and enjoyed*, even while they were Engliſh colonies " under an Engliſh King:—and WHY? Becauſe," ſays this admirable logician, " becauſe to thoſe be- " nefits and bleſſings ſo well underſtood by you, " you would, doubtleſs, prefer (for nothing ſhort " of *preference* is here adequate) the horrid miſery " which has attended the Revolution of *France*, al- " though there exiſts not in your country a ſingle " *cauſe* for ſuch an *effect*."

Well, let us proceed to other ſpecimens of logic and candour. In another place we are told that —" Men who profeſſedly ſeek to change the Con- " ſtitution on *French* principles *(for there has not* " *been a ſingle propoſition of* REFORM *that is not on* " THOSE *principles.)*—"

Now, Gentlemen, recollecting theſe ſeveral quotations, you muſt be convinced that theſe *Reformers*, like one *Paul*, a Jewiſh Jacobin of old, are " peſtilent fellows, and movers of ſedition;* that to propoſe Reform, is to " attack" the Conſtitution; and to call in queſtion the right of the

* Acts xxiv. 5.

Borough-

Borough-holders to our allegiance, is to manifeſt an inſurrectionary, rebellious diſpoſition, which it is convenient to expreſs by the phraſe "*French* "*principles*," becauſe it is a phraſe perfectly *unambiguous*.

Here, then, by a little croſs-examination of this witneſs, we come at the truth; and find, that to cruſh Reform, and conſequently our liberties, was the real object of the war. When we conſider how willing a prophet this author has been, to aſcend the high places of our modern *Balaks*, "take up "his parable, and curſe their enemies," the Reformers, we muſt not expect him to depart from the myſteriouſneſs of language neceſſary on ſuch an occaſion, nor to ſpeak *intentionally* againſt his Employers; but, as in the caſe of his prototype, all he ſays makes *againſt* thoſe *Moabites* of whoſe abominations he is the extravagant panegyriſt, and *for* the cauſe of thoſe Reformers whom he endeavours to curſe with ſincerity and good-will.*

VII. This

* For the ſeveral quotations from *The Exam. of France a Warning to Britain*, ſee p. 207. 200, 92, 102, 110, 146. But what was to be expected, in the way of *reaſoning*, from a man who had placed in the title-page of his book, as a *motto* to his work, the following quotation from *Soame Jenyns?* "It is a certain though a ſtrange "truth, that in Politics ALL PRINCIPLES that are ſpeculatively "right are practically wrong; the reaſon of which is, that they "proceed on a ſuppoſition, that men act *rationally*; which being "by

VII. This argument reſpecting the "*object of* "*the War*" has led me farther than I intended; but its importance, I truſt, will plead my excuſe. I will now return to *another object*, about which I was going to ſpeak. Let us, then, Gentlemen, aſk our Candidates—for, by their putting themſelves in that ſituation, I preſume they are competent to give us good opinions on conſtitutional points and caſes of policy—let us aſk them, I ſay, if *the object* of the Reforming Societies, viz. *to reſtore to the People a Houſe of Commons*, be, or be not, an object that ought to be purſued?—and what *danger to the Conſtitution* we have to apprehend from the attempt?——Were thoſe falſe reporters of plots, the

"by no means true, all that is built on *ſo falſe a foundation*, on ex- "periment falls to the ground."

It is "ſpeculatively right," ſays *Locke*, *Blackſtone*, *Chatham*, and *Camden*, that a nation ſhould not be taxed but by its Repreſentatives. But all this, ſays *Charles the Firſt*, *James the Second*, *Soame Jenyns*, and *Arthur Young*, is "practically wrong." Ergo; it is practically right for the Crown to take the property of the ſubject when it pleaſes, and in what proportion it thinks fit. Again; when a free government is going to decay through corruption, it is "ſpe- "culatively right," ſays *Machiavel* and *Chatham*; and ſay our Reforming Societies, to revert to the firſt principles of its Conſtitution. No, ſay the Borough-mongers; that is "practically wrong;" proceeding from the "falſe foundation" of ſuppoſing men *rational* creatures, which is "by no means true;" as we can aver, on the authority of a great wit, and of a profound logician, our very good friends, who have written unanſwerable books to prove it practically right, that the Purſe and Power of the whole nation—malgre King, Lords, and Commons—ſhould be veſted in us and our heirs, until Oppreſſion, Inſurrection, Revolution, and all the other bleſſed effects of Corruption ſhall be regularly brought about.

Miniſters,

Miniſters, as falſely to report his Majeſty to be indiſpoſed, and unable to tranſact buſineſs; and were his crown, his throne, his ſceptre, and his ſword, to be *aſſumed and divided amongſt* their mock-majeſties, the *Borough-holders*, would our Candidates eſteem the *reſtoring* to our true Sovereign his power and regalia, too *dangerous to the Conſtitution* to be attempted?

Or if theſe mock-kings ſhould take upon them to garble the Houſe of Lords, as they have garbled the Houſe of Commons, ſo that there were a *decided majority* of their Deputies in the Houſe of Peers to over-rule the real Peers of the realm, would the *reſtoring* of *this* branch of the legiſlature to its independence be *a Reform of Parliament*, in which they could diſcover *danger to the Conſtitution?* —Is there, then, let us aſk our Candidates, nothing *dangerous to the Conſtitution* but the doing juſtice to THE PEOPLE?

But we did not hear a word, Gentlemen, not a ſingle word, from *Miniſters* and the *Borough-holders*; no, nor from their *Committee of Secrecy*, about *danger to the Conſtitution* from Conſpiracies to ſtrip THE PEOPLE of their ſhare in the Government. No, Gentlemen, and they had a good reaſon, as I have ſhewn you, for being on that ſubject as ſilent as the grave; and, for the ſame reaſon, it was neceſſary to make a thundering

noiſe about danger ſomewhere elſe. It was therefore neceſſary to ſay the *King* and *Lords* were in danger; whereas none had taken from them one iota of their functions; none but theſe very Borough-holders had undermined them; while every thing *had been taken* from the *Commons!* And you now, Gentlemen, know by whom.

VIII. If, under ſuch a Conſtitution as ours, there can be danger to our liberties, it muſt be when the *Repreſentative* branch is attacked. In reſpect of ſuch a branch, all other dangers are, comparatively, as duſt on the balance. Take an extreme caſe:——Suppoſe all hereditary power and honours aboliſhed; Liberty, and Order, and good Government, *might* ſtill be ſafe, becauſe *political liberty* would ſtill remain. *America* is in proof:—throwing off the Engliſh dominion, ſhe changed the *other* Engliſh forms, as not eſſential; but ſhe preſerved *that* Engliſh form, on which political liberty abſolutely depends.

Here, let me aſk every politician, If any nation, in any age, ever experienced the bleſſings of good government in ſo eminent a degree as they have been experienced by *America* ſince that change?—Can any Gentleman preſent point out, in the whole annals of the human race, another inſtance, of an equal duration, of ſuch peace and felicity as *Ame-*

rica has already enjoyed under her preſent government? In the idea of national felicity, an aſſurance of *permanency*, a rational anticipation of *the happineſs of poſterity*, is, I preſume, an eſſential ingredient.

Without political liberty to afford this aſſurance, there can be no felicity of a nature higher than that of which well-treated ſlaves are capable.

Compare this picture of *America* with the picture of all the monarchies, or ariſtocracies, or governments made up of theſe orders mixed, on the continent of *Europe*, or in *Aſia*, or *Africa*, and then pronounce on what it is, in the frame of a government, on which national happineſs depends!—— How ineſtimable, in ſuch a ſurvey, muſt *a ſubſtantial, popular Repreſentation* appear! Without it, there is neither freedom nor happineſs; all is gloom, or uncertainty, or wretchedneſs: with it, with Repreſentation in reality and perfection, the earth is a paradiſe, and man an exalted being.

But it is a practice, Gentlemen, amongſt the enemies of Reform in this country, and their deluded ſupporters, to obſerve, that the peace and happineſs of *America* depends upon the wiſdom and virtue of *Waſhington*, and not upon *the purity of Repreſentation*. The *affectation* of this belief, is wick-

 edneſs;

edneſs; the *reality* is weakneſs. The very ſame claſſes of men are continually lamenting that man is ſo *ſelfiſh* an animal, that the idea of governing a community through the medium of an *incorrupt* body of Repreſentatives, is completely viſionary. Hence they are compelled to do away, as well as they can, the magnificent fact, of FIFTEEN AMERICAN NATIONS PRECISELY SO GOVERNED. And this they attempt, through an artful, but a very ſhallow, compliment to the virtues of *Waſhington*: for the truth of the caſe, from thoſe very virtues, recoils with ten-fold force upon themſelves. The Preſident of the Americans did not arrive amongſt them by right of conqueſt, nor by hereditary deſcent; neither was he raiſed to rule over them by that army at the head of which he had been ſo illuſtrious, and of which he was the idol; but he was freely choſen by *the Repreſentatives* of the People. —Here, then, we ſee the happy effect of a *genuine* Repreſentation. It *does* "ſpeak the will of the People;" it *does* give to the higheſt virtue the higheſt place; it *does*, as the ſparks fly upward, *naturally* promote the happineſs and glory of a nation!

Nor did the modeſt *Waſhington* wriggle himſelf into the Preſident's chair by intrigue, or by the management of a corrupt Faction. No; he was called from his farm, to preſide over his country, by the unanimous wiſh of that country, truly expreſſed

by the voice of faithful Repreſentatives; *their wiſdom* thus gracing and honouring *his virtues.*

Now the art of governing the *ſelfiſh* animal our ſhallow adverſaries ſpeak of, is to govern him by his *intereſt*; by the ſimple contrivance of making his *intereſt* and his *duty* go hand in hand. This, in reſpect of a nation, is effected, and can only be effected by means of *a ſubſtantial Repreſentation of the People*, and well-regulated elections; preſerving to the People a ſolid influence over their Servants, with the power of early diſmiſſion, when they forfeit their confidence.

If it be *viſionary* to think of eſtabliſhing ſuch influence of the People over their Legiſlators, how comes it to paſs, that *Turkey* is better governed than *Morocco*; *Germany* than *Turkey*; *England* than *Germany*; and *America* than *England?* Is it not becauſe of the *gradations* of the ſcience of government from bad to better? If, therefore, *American Repreſentation* be the moſt complete, their government is the moſt perfect.

All other inſtitutions towards the compoſition of a good government, whether of Senates, or Councils, or a Houſe of Nobles; of Directors, or Preſidents, or Kings; may be accommodated to the faſhions of the day, or of the country; or to the humours of a people: but the inſtitution of a

found

ſound and ſubſtantial Repreſentation, is that without which no good government can poſſibly exiſt; becauſe ſuch Repreſentation is of the eſſence of political liberty, and is that without which a people are cattle, not men.

With regard to *Waſhington*,—when *America* ſhall loſe the *man*, ſhe will ſhed the tears of gratitude and affection; but, having paid his virtues due honour, ſhe will allow him to deſcend from his high ſtation for the ſweets of retirement in the evening of his years; and on ſuch an occaſion will change her *Preſident* with as little *political* emotion as a wiſe man changes his garment.

IX. Here, Gentlemen, I muſt put to you and to our Candidates a ſerious Queſtion, which the conduct and the inſinuations of our Rulers has made neceſſary.——Is, or is not, *a ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation* compatible with the exiſtence of a *King and Nobility?* Or, in other words, Is the Engliſh Conſtitution, giving us the forms of *three* diſtinct Powers, and telling us ſo much about *Repreſentation*, about the *Commons in Parliament aſſembled*, and ſo forth, really a good and *intelligible* ſyſtem of government; or only a cunning impoſture, for duping the People into ſubmiſſion to *an union of monarchy and ariſtocracy*, or ſomething worſe? Is it, in ſhort, a really valuable poſſeſſion, or an empty, contemptible bubble?

It is frequently inſinuated, that the revolutions of *America* and *France* prove, that a ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation is incompatible with the exiſtence of thoſe elevated orders; and if you will allow ſhallow ſophiſtry to paſs for argument, thoſe revolutions may prove either that or any thing elſe.—Our Borough-holding teachers are perpetually paying compliments, in their peculiar way, to our underſtandings; and here they truſt we cannot diſtinguiſh between the *neceſſary cauſe* of an effect, and thoſe *circumſtances* which merely do not prevent a *natural cauſe* from producing its effect.

The *cauſe* why Royalty and Nobility were rejected in *America* and in *France*, was *reſentment* of wrongs and oppreſſion: each of thoſe nations having a ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation, was undoubtedly a *circumſtance* favourable to their carrying the public will into effect. This, however, ſo far from being with us an objection to a *ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation*, is ſurely a recommendation; as it is a proof of *its efficacy to ſecure a People from oppreſſion*, come the attempts from what quarter they may. For this very reaſon it is, that a ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation is ſo *objectionable* to our Borough-holders, whoſe own oppreſſions it would inſtantly annihilate. Here is the reaſon why this pretended danger to the King and Nobility is inſinuated; for that theſe gentry, at the bottom, care as little about what becomes of a *King* and

Nobility

Nobility as even the French themſelves, is manifeſt from their whole conduct.

Is not the very dominion they have uſurped, and are ſo anxious to hold, degrading to *both?* and threatening in the higheſt degree to their *exiſtence?* This dominion, although not apparent to the careleſs eye, is nevertheleſs ſolid and abſolute. Every thing in this country bends before it. *Parliamentary intereſt* is the road to all favour, from the peaſant to the peer. And this ſpurious dominion has reduced the proper ariſtocracy of England to a ſecond-rate ſort of nobility, ſubordinate to theſe lords of all; while it holds the King himſelf in a ſtate of vaſſalage, equally diſhonourable and dangerous. A King depending for his revenue on a great nation, is the proof of his being a King of *Free Men*, and therefore ſuch dependence is his glory; but to depend for this revenue on a ſmall corrupt faction of uſurping ſubjects, who have ſtolen the national purſe, and thereby defeated every end of the Conſtitution, is in every ſenſe diſhonourable and degrading, and is even threatening to the exiſtence of royalty.

When the great Champion of the Faction is bewildered in the mazes of his own perverted reaſoning, on a ſubject he does not underſtand, and in the tempeſt of paſſion bolts out unguarded truths, what ſays he on this ſubject? "Examine," ſays

he, " the Houſe of Commons *in whatever light you* " *will*, and it will be found to poſſeſs, *in the power* " *of the purſe*, ſo enormous an authority, that the " other branches of the legiſlature are *abſolutely at* " *its mercy*."*

Now ſober-minded men, acquainted with political ſcience, know that, in a free country, all power, and conſequently all orders and magiſtracies, muſt ultimately depend on *the nation at large*, and on its conviction of their fitneſs to preſerve its liberties, and promote its well-being; in ſhort, that government muſt depend on PUBLIC OPINION. A nation aſſociates under certain forms and rules agreed on, and confers certain powers; which forms, and rules, and powers, *while principles are adhered to*, will uphold the intended government; but ſtill its main and ultimate ſupport is PUBLIC OPINION; and happy am I to have the ſupport of the Attorney General in this doctrine. " The PUBLIC OPINION " of government is, in this country," ſays he, " as " well as in every other, its principal ſupport."†

Now in order to give a reſtraining, wholeſome, *peaceable* effect to *Public Opinion*, ſo that the People may have no occaſion to quarrel with their King and their Nobility, this nation claims, as the com-

* *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 92.

† Trial of Thomas Hardy, I. 68.

mon

mon right of all ranks, *the liberty of the preſs*; but the Commons reſerve to themſelves excluſively "*the power of the purſe.*" Ever ſince the firſt dawnings of political knowledge, they have uniformly aſſerted this neceſſary right with the moſt extreme jealouſy; for it was evident, even to our plain unlettered anceſtors, that public liberty abſolutely depended on "*the power of the purſe,*" or, in other words, on the ſinews and ſtrength of Government, the ſolid power of the State being in the *people*'s own hands, that is, in the hands of THE COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

Who does not know, that a people, by their phyſical ſtrength, can at any time level with the duſt every authority in any ſtate? Who does not know, that *the Commons in Parliament aſſembled*, means *the power of the people concentered in Parliament?* And who needs to be taught, that ſuch a power *ought* to be too great for the King or the Lords, or both united, if ever they ſhould attempt aught againſt the people, for whoſe good alone they were made branches of the Conſtitution; and on whoſe opinion—for what elſe is *public opinion?*—they ought to depend?

This, then, in the dialect of angry faction, is the Houſe of Commons having the other branches of the Legiſlature *abſolutely at its mercy.* But at whoſe

"*mercy*"

"*mercy*" does this firebrand * of faction desire to leave not only the *King* and the *Nobility*, but the *Nation* besides?—In whose hands would *he* persuade you to leave "*the power of the purse*," this "*enormous authority*" on which every thing depends?—Why, truly, in the hands of the *one hundred and fifty-four*.—This, it seems, is the gang that is to have the King and the Nobility "*absolutely at its mercy:*" as it also has all the decisions of your House of Commons, of whose Members a very decided majority are *creatures of its appointment!!!*

And how much it must add to our satisfaction to be informed by this kind gentleman, that this House, "once being chosen by the *few* they represent "the *many* † *!*"—That "they may be *accurately* de-"scribed without using the word, or referring to the "idea of *representation* † *!*" And that "to call them "the *Representatives* of the people, is a very *inaccurate*

* If this compliment be thought somewhat strong, I beg to observe that it is borrowed from Mr. *Young*, (p. 81), who presents it to Dr. *Price*, for maintaining, in his excellent *Observations on Civil Liberty*, that "in every free state, every man is his own legislator. "Government is an institution for the benefit of the people governed, which they have power to model as they please; and to say "that they can have too much of this power, is to say, that there "ought to be a power in the state superior to that which gives it "being."

† *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 89, 90, 171.

"mode

" mode of expreſſion * !"—And how conſolatory it likewiſe is, to be cured of our old-faſhioned prejudices, and to learn from this ſame reſpectable authority, that, " *unequal repreſentation, rotten boroughs,* " *long Parliaments, extravagant Courts, ſelfiſh Mini-* " *ſters,* and *corrupt majorities,* are ſo intimately in- " terwoven with our practical freedom, that it " would require better political anatomiſts than " our modern reformers, to ſhew, in fact, that we " do not *owe our liberty* to the identical *evils* which " they want to expunge * !"

In what a deplorable condition, Gentlemen, muſt be the " *practical freedom*" of the Americans, which is not " interwoven" with *any one* of theſe happy " evils!" What egregious dolts they were, to encounter nakedneſs and diſtreſs, and to ſubject their country to the deſolations of a ſeven years war, to extricate themſelves from the " " woven" web of " unequal repreſentation, rotten " boroughs, long Parliaments, extravagant Courts, " ſelfiſh Miniſters, and corrupt majorities," to which we Engliſhmen, it ſeems, " *owe our li-* " *berty !!!*"

Well, Gentlemen, by this time you are ſatisfied, I hope, that our friends the *borough-holders* have a very ſtrong reaſon indeed for thinking *a ſubſtantial*

* Ibid.

popular

popular Repreſentation OBJECTIONABLE; but whether it be for fear of its "ſwallowing up" the *King* and *Nobility*, as the *Secretary* tells us it would*, or for a fear that comes yet more *home to theſe mens buſineſs and boſoms*, you will pleaſe to decide for yourſelves.

If the objection to the *circumſtance* of ſuch a Repreſentation be really on account of the *King* and the *Nobility*, theſe cloſe reaſoners had better, methinks, object at once to there being A PEOPLE; for, the exiſtence of *a people*, although no *cauſe* for aboliſhing a King and a Nobility, which that people deſire to have as branches of their Conſtitution, is *a very ſtrong circumſtance indeed* in favour of abolition, if that King or that Nobility ſhould ever betray their truſt and become tyrants.

Do we want demonſtration that a *ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation* is *not* unfriendly to the exiſtence of a King and Nobility? We have it in one of theſe very countries which rejected them, after they appeared to its people in the characters of oppreſſors. *America*, from the very origin of its colonization, had always been in poſſeſſion of a *ſubſtantial popular Repreſentation*; and yet until the quarrel with Great Britain, ſhe had been perfectly content with theſe elevated orders in the preſiding legiſlature, and had

* *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 93.

never,

never, no not for a moment, ſhewn the ſmalleſt ſymptom of diſſatisfaction in that form of government.

But when, *in an unjuſt cauſe*, Britiſh armies, and mercenaries hired of German deſpots, were ſent to reduce them by fire and ſword to unconditional ſubmiſſion, at the feet of a nation, in the legiſlature of which they could ſee *nothing but a King and a Nobility*—for they knew well enough that its repreſentation was a mere ghoſt—can we be ſurpriſed they ſhould ſay, 'hereditary elevation has made 'theſe men forget themſelves; but they ſhall ſee 'how little need we have of them!'

But let us put the inſinuated, nay the *declared* propoſition of our borough-holding inſtructors into plain Engliſh, and then it will ſtand thus: '*Political* '*liberty* is incompatible with the exiſtence of a King 'and a Nobility!' Now take either the literal predication, or the converſe of this propoſition, and then tell me, I pray, who are they that are hoſtile to thoſe elevated orders? That '*ſubſtantial popular repreſentation*' and '*political liberty*' are convertible terms, every child in political ſcience muſt know. *That*, the cauſe; *this*, the effect. Without the former, the latter can have no exiſtence; except in a ſimple democracy, where all the people legiſlate in perſon.

Here,

Here, Gentlemen, it is very material that you ſhould diveſt yourſelves of all prejudice, and judge between the reformers and the borough-holding faction. The former ſay, and they ſay truly, that we cannot have political liberty without a ſubſtantial popular repreſentation; the latter falſely maintain, that we cannot have a ſubſtantial repreſentation, or, in other words, political liberty, without aboliſhing Royalty and Nobility. This is their direct argument. Here again I muſt open the borough-mongers' bible, and give you another chapter. It is from the book of *Numbers*, which that ſect eſteem even more canonical than the book of *Kings*. The writer quotes as follows, from a ſpeech of Mr. Grey:—"Involved in a moſt RUINOUS WAR, the whole commercial credit of the nation is ſhaken; and we have ſunk from the zenith of our proſperity, into the moſt NECESSITOUS and DISTRESSED SITUATION. In this CALAMITOUS STATE, with reſpect to credit at home, and war abroad, nothing could tend ſo much to deliver the country from theſe DREADFUL EVILS, as to have *a pure and uncorrupted Houſe of Commons, emanating freely and fairly from the people.*"—Upon which, amongſt other obſervations of the ſaid Secretary, we find the following:—'Such a "pure" Parliament would ſoon put an end to this "ruinous war."—How? By making an immediate peace with the regicides, and acknowledging the Republic of France. This is what we are thus told

'a "pure"

'a "pure" Parliament would give us. The gen-
'tleman knows that ſuch a Parliament, ſo choſen
'and ſo ſitting, would give us all this inſtantly;
'and I believe that the honourable gentleman alſo
'knows, that it would give us abundantly MORE.
'It would eaſe us of the "ruinous war of Kings,"
'for IT WOULD SOON EASE US OF THE EXPENCE OF
'A KING; AND IT WOULD ENTIRELY DISSIPATE
THE "*dreadful evils*" OF A HOUSE OF LORDS, AND
THE "*calamities*" OF A NOBILITY †.' What a true picture is here of the Engliſh Conſtitution! What excellent logic! If the nation have "a pure and "uncorrupted Houſe of Commons, emanating "freely and fairly from the people," it is impoſſible at the ſame time it ſhould chooſe to have *a King and a Houſe of Lords!* Now, which of the two parties will an Engliſh People *believe*, and with which will they *act?*

With the reformers they may both believe and act, in perfect conſiſtence with an attachment to Nobility and Royalty, to their own ſecurity, and the liberties of their country; but if they even *believe* with the borough-holders, how can they *act* with them? Will the moſt bigotted Tory in the land, when the queſtion comes home to him, (if he have honeſty and ſenſe) vote himſelf and his country into certain ſlavery, in compliment to men who, in the

† *Example of France a Warning to England*, p. 212.

phraſe

phraſe of Mr. *Burke*, are " ſwaddled, rocked, and " dandled into legiſlatures" and rulers? For ſurely it is not becauſe a King and a Nobility are *born* ſuch, that gives them any title to an Engliſhman's regard; but becauſe the nation has agreed to give them a place in its Conſtitution, under a perſuaſion that theſe hereditary elevations have a tendency to give *ſteadineſs to a free government*, and *permanence to national liberty!*

If this perſuaſion were once effectually done away, the elevated orders muſt of courſe drop off like autumnal leaves. But how can this perſuaſion long remain, if the Borough-holders, *carrying with them the whole influence of government*, are to repreſent the very exiſtence of a King and Nobility as *incompatible with freedom?* Who then are more deeply intereſted in ſilencing ſuch treacherous friends, and in reforming our repreſentation, than his Majeſty and our Nobles? Such conduct would confirm our long experienced perſuaſion of their utility, in contributing to *the ſteadineſs of a free government*, convulſed by the treaſons of the Borough-holders; and in aiding to give *permanence to national* liberty, threatened by thoſe men with a total and early extinction.

Although his Majeſty, ſurrounded and deceived by corrupt *borough-holding* counſellors and their truſty creatures, has been made to give the Royal Name

Name to all their odious proceedings againſt Reformers and Reform; and although a great majority of the Peers, many of them *Borough-holders* themſelves, have perſonally ſanctioned and enforced thoſe proceedings; yet moſt certain it is, that the Public Voice, notwithſtanding the large portion of diſapprobation that has fallen on thoſe proceedings, has not yet uttered expreſſions of hoſtility towards Royalty and Nobility; but the very contrary. If any thing can be evidence that the people of England are deeply attached to thoſe elevated orders, it is this. Whatever, therefore, may have been the provocations which cauſed the people of *America*, and of *France*, to quarrel with hereditary elevations, we have no ſuch quarrel with them.

There are many, indeed, amongſt us, who think there is cauſe of complaint; who think both Royalty and Nobility very ill adviſed; but who wiſh them no worſe, than that they would conſult their own true intereſt, and honeſtly aſſiſt in healing the wounds of that Conſtitution, upon which reſts all their claims, and all their hopes, to hold exiſtence in this land.

Although *America* and *France* have rejected both theſe orders, we in *England* are not of the ſame mind: we have both; and we deſire to keep them. —In no country on earth can they be ſo ſecure.— Here they have all that can eſtabliſh, defend, and

fortify them. Antiquity, the cuſtoms of our anceſtors, the habits, the prejudices, the earlieſt and lateſt education of the people; every thing, in ſhort, which created *public opinion*, and begets *ſecond nature*, are in their favour.

They have, beſides, great intrinſic power and ſolid influence;—the King, from his office; the Nobility, from their ſtation and their wealth. But they have much more than even all this. Their exiſtence is interwoven into the very texture of our Law and Conſtitution; not to be ſeparated but by rending in pieces that fabric ſo dear to Engliſhmen. And, mark!——that Conſtitution, *if they would leave it in its purity*, would effectually provide for their permanency, by *preventing their becoming odious to the people*, through tyranny and oppreſſion. —Herein, alone, they might find ample ſecurity; but the whole taken together is a reſiſtleſs anſwer to the queſtion I propoſed, and completely refutes the doctrine of the Borough-holders, that political liberty is not conſiſtent with the exiſtence of a King and a Nobility.

Where did theſe ſolemn Gentlemen learn their logic? Where did they learn that a free nation *cannot* think *Nobility* a good ingredient in a conſtitution of government? or *cannot* chooſe to call their chief magiſtrate *King?* In what hiſtory do they find that any people under the ſun ever did throw

throw off the dominion to which for ages they had been accuſtomed, on ſpeculative fancies, or for any other cauſe than a ſenſe of wrongs, too great, or too irritating to be longer borne?

Can there, then, in the Nobility of this land, at a period ſo momentous to themſelves as the preſent, be any infatuation ſo aſtoniſhing, as their working with every engine, and laviſhing great ſums of money, to corrupt and deſtroy that Conſtitution, on the purity and perfection of which their own continuance in this land abſolutely depends; unleſs they mean to take another courſe, and to erect on its ruins an arbitrary, a hateful ariſtocracy!

If the Borough-holding Nobility will drive the People, and by a conduct the moſt treaſonable and flagitious, to the neceſſity of determining, whether they will have Nobles without a Conſtitution, or a Conſtitution without Nobles, they who provoke the queſtion muſt abide the conſequences. And it behoves all Engliſh *Gentlemen* to reflect in good time on which ſide they ought to arrange themſelves. To whom do the *Commons* naturally look for aid and preſervation, but to thoſe amongſt *themſelves* who are poſſeſſed of wealth and education? —Such perſons are their natural guides and leaders. Surely theſe leaders, when popular rights are invaded by a Nobility, will not deſert their own co-

lours, and go over to the enemy! Surely their wealth and education, which lead them more into a *ſocial* intercourſe with the Nobility than with the bulk of their own order, will not ſo far infect them with ariſtocratic prejudices, as to blind them to their own true intereſt, and to warp them from their duty to their country! With the example of *France* before their eyes, will they ſuffer themſelves to be implicated in an invaſion of popular rights, or in meaſures of hoſtility to the Conſtitution!

Should Engliſh Gentlemen, in general, be found capable of ſuch a defection from the cauſe of political liberty, it would furniſh as ſtrong an objection againſt the Conſtitution as its bittereſt enemies have yet urged. It would tend to prove, that the conſtitutional line of ſeparation between the Nobility and the Gentry is a mere arbitrary and ſhallow invention, doing violence to nature; and that national ariſtocracy, capable of the greateſt beneficence, or the greateſt miſchief, according to the inſtitutions of the government, is a power we are as yet too ignorant to uſe to our own benefit.

X. But, with your permiſſion, Gentlemen, I muſt return once more to the ſubject of *danger*.—Obſerve the conſiſtent conduct of the Borough-holders, and the great Captain of Corruption, who ſo ably fills the office of their choſen leader. They, Gentle-

Gentlemen, can ſee no earthly *danger*, but from reforming our popular Repreſentation!!!

As a Means of Preventing this Reform, they think nothing of the *danger* of plunging their country into a war *againſt the Rights of the Human Race*, againſt every feeling of the human ſoul, capable of exciting it to the utmoſt maddening enthuſiaſm; and of even avowing "the abſolute and "unequivocal reſtoration of the old government of "France, with terrors in its train,"* to be one of their objects; nor of moving heaven and earth to involve in it every power, and every people of Europe.

They make light of the *danger* of Engliſh diſcontent, from laying the main burthen of *ſuch* a war upon this country; and ſubſidizing in *ſuch* a cauſe every Deſpot who will hazard his dominions for the ſake of our money.

They can diſcern no *danger* in filling the land with fabricated, falſe, and wicked alarms, of conſpiracies and treaſons; and poiſoning the ſources of all ſocial intercourſe, and the public morals, by holding out rewards for the worſt of mankind to deſtroy the beſt.

* *Example of France, &c.* p. 134.

They can ſee no *danger* in expunging from the *Bill of Rights* its beſt proviſions for the ſafeguard of Freedom; and in ſubjecting the ſincereſt friends of their country to ignominious baniſhment or death, if they ſhall but declare their wrongs!

They can ſee no *danger* from the commerce of corruption ſo openly carried on by retail in our Boroughs, and by wholeſale in another place.—They can ſee no *danger* from the Peers having in their hands two branches of the government inſtead of one.

No; ſo abſorbed are theſe Borough-holding gentry in a ſenſe of danger to their own iniquitous dominion over us, that all other dangers vaniſh from before their ſight, and are chaſed from their imagination.

But ſhall the Proprietors of the ſoil of *England* —men who have ſo great a ſtake on the iſſue of this hazardous game—take upon truſt all that theſe corrupt gameſters tell them?—and conſent to ſee with no other eyes than theirs? Will Gentlemen, who have no imaginable intereſt to purſue but that of their country, blindly back the deſperate ſchemes of this intoxicated faction; and ſupport, without examination, all their crafty meaſures for gradually annihilating a government of freedom under King,

Lords,

Lords, and Commons, to eſtabliſh in themſelves and their families a deſpotic and odious oligarchy?

After the view which we have taken of their actions and deſigns, I conceive it to be impoſſible not to ſee that dangers innumerable grow out of a corrupted and perverted Repreſentation; and impoſſible alſo not to be convinced, that the greateſt of our dangers is the exiſtence of this very Faction—of the ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOUR—under the guidance of a leader with the eloquence of a *Cicero*, the ambition of a *Cæſar*, the hypocriſy of a *Cromwell*, and the treachery of an *Apoſtate!*

XI. But clothe the Miniſter, if you pleaſe, with exalted virtue; grace him with all that can adorn a good man; let him be the beſt of human beings;—what then? Why, then, *he would not be Miniſter a month!*——From his own lips we have been told, "that without a parliamentary Reforma-"tion, neither the liberty of the nation can be pre-"ſerved, nor the permanence of a wiſe and virtuous "Adminiſtration can be ſecured."*

On whom does this Miniſter *now* depend for the proud ſituation of DICTATOR to his country?—on that Country? or on its King? or on the Borough-holders? And to whom do the ambitious bow down, but to their Creators and Supporters?

* Mr. *Pitt*'s Speech, May 18, 1782.

But it is ſaid, Gentlemen, that all power reſts *on public opinion*. Granted. And it is for this reaſon, that, where power is illegitimate, the grand ſecret of government is *to poiſon public opinion*; and if the truth were fully brought to light, it would, perhaps, appear, that *Great Britain* pays for *this poiſoning of the public opinion*, in the infinite means uſed to that end, a ſum far larger than the whole revenue of either *Denmark* or *Sweden*; kingdoms that have armies and navies to ſupport; and whoſe alliance is courted by the proudeſt and moſt powerful ſtates.

And to what is it owing, but to this *poiſoning of public opinion*, that the people have been taught to ſee *danger* in a Reform in their parliamentary Repreſentation?—Danger in *chooſing Repreſentatives*, inſtead of having *Rulers appointed* them by the *one hundred and fifty-four!!!*

The very propoſition is the eſſence of inſult to human reaſon. But *abſurdities* and *contradictions in terms* are the baſe coin of our Rotten-borough ſovereigns. When *fraud* is backed by *force*, common ſenſe is ſet at defiance without ceremony.

But I turn from theſe contemptible impoſtors, and I aſk you—I aſk the independent, the well-informed Gentlemen of *Lincolnſhire*, to ſhew me this *danger*. I am not ſo viſionary as to ſuppoſe that a corrupt Houſe of Commons will ſpontaneouſly

ouſly reform its own corruptions. It muſt firſt perceive in the People a *knowledge* of their excluſive right of creation—it muſt feel the commanding influence of *public opinion*. That feeling will be the electric touch to prepare the elements of Repreſentation, now loſt and dormant in the dead chaos of Corruption, to ſpring at the public voice into life, beauty, and harmony, for our uſe and happineſs. "*God ſaid, Let there be light; and there* "*was light!*" And when the *Public Voice* ſhall ſay, Let there be Repreſentation, there will be Repreſentation: no refractory elements will have power to reſiſt the god-like impulſe!

A real *Public Voice*, proceeding upon previous *knowledge*, and expreſſing *truth*, is the efficient cauſe of *peaceful* reform. Irregular authority may be mortified, but it will not aſſume the tone of being offended; it may feel reluctance, but it cannot obſtruct; it may have its private diſcontents, but the public ſatisfaction and harmony will not be diſturbed.

The nation will always have means, without aſking leave of Lord *Grenville*, or of Mr. *Pitt*, or of their Borough-holding maſters, of ſhewing its knowledge, and declaring its rights. When Public Opinion ſhall no longer be divided and defeated, but ſhall pour its wholeſome truths into the ears of the *one hundred and fifty-four*, they will ſhrink in a moment

moment into their native nothingneſs. From ſpurious ſovereigns and pillagers of their country, they will become its meek inſtruments in cleanſing the Houſe they ſit in of its impurities. They will begin with a vote, that "The influence of the Bo-"roughs has increaſed, is increaſing, and ought "to be diminiſhed."

They will proceed to give the people a Repreſentation in Parliament, which in a fair and honeſt ſenſe ſhall accord with the fundamental principles of the Conſtitution. This done——whence is to ariſe the *danger* that we hear of? Will "the Bo-"roughs," which, as Mr. *Pitt* himſelf has told us, "have now, in fact, no actual exiſtence but in "the return of Members to the Houſe, "riſe in inſurrection?

Will thoſe which he tell us "have no exiſtence "in property, in population, in trade, in weight," rebel againſt the Parliament backed by the great body of the People?

Or is this *danger* to come from "another ſet of "Boroughs," of which he has alſo ſpoken; "a "ſet in the lofty poſſeſſion of Engliſh Freedom, "claiming to themſelves *the right of bringing their* "*votes to market*;—Boroughs, which have no other "market, no other property, and no other ſtake

"in

" in the country, than the property and price " which they procure for their votes."

But, hold—perhaps there *may* be danger here; for I perceive *theſe* Boroughs have powerful princes for their allies, or patrons, or ſovereigns, I know not which. Mr. *Pitt* is ſtill my guide. " In fact," ſays he, " they belong more to the Nabob of Ar- " cott than they do to the people of *Great Britain.* " They are Cities and Boroughs more within the " juriſdiction of the *Carnatic*, than within that of " *Great Britain:* and it is a fact pretty well known, " and generally underſtood, that the *Nabob of Ar-* " *cott* has no leſs *than ſeven*, or eight, *Members in* " *this Houſe.*

" Such Boroughs, then, are ſources of Corrup- " tion; they give riſe to *an inundation of corrupt* " *Wealth and corrupt Members*, who have no regard " nor connection either for or with the people of " this kingdom.* Might not a *foreign ſtate in en-* " *mity with this country*, by means of theſe Bo- " roughs, procure a party of men to act for them " under the maſk and character of Members of this " Houſe?"

* How the Miniſter and his friend Mr. *Boyd* (now joint member, with his partner Mr. *Paul Benfield*, for *Shafteſbury, of immaculate memory*) when they meet in St. Stephen's Chapel, will lament and weep over this " inundation of corrupt Wealth, and corrupt " Members!"

If

If the gold of *Arcott* could create ſuch a party, why may not *French* gold?* What an argument is here for putting an end to Borough venality, when it threatens to deluge our very legiſlature with "*French principles*," and to ſeat in that aſſembly the agents of the Directory!

But when we attend to a prevailing report at this moment in circulation, and contraſt it with the virtuous indignation expreſſed at the venality of theſe Boroughs by Mr. *Pitt*, while a *private man*, what, Gentlemen, muſt be our feelings!——It is reported that Mr. *Pitt*, the *Miniſter*, has ſecured to himſelf a proviſional refuſal of almoſt every ſaleable Borough in the kingdom, for the preſent election, at prices agreed on. If voluntary Candidates, of known attachment to Miniſtry, preſent themſelves, and come up to the price, they are to be accepted; but if offers from any who can but be ſuſpected of holding principles of Reform, or even of ſteady oppoſition to Miniſters, they are to be rejected, and perſons more proper for the purpoſes of the day are to be ſent down.

Now whether this report be, or be not, founded in fact, makes no difference in the caſe as *a danger-*

* This metal abounds ſo much with the *French*, that, according to Mr. *Arthur Young*, it "*created* and *fomented* the revolution of *Geneva*, the war in *Poland*, and *the conſpiracies in almoſt every part of Europe*." See *Annals of Agriculture*, No. 100, p. 304.

ous defect in the Conſtitution. It is moſt certain, that a Miniſter, hackneyed in the ways of corruption, ſo tempted, might ſo act. But if ſuch a Miniſter, by his fatal counſels, had nearly ruined his country, and had at the ſame time brought himſelf into a ſituation from which he could not retreat without the hazard of being driven to the ſcaffold, deſperation would naturally dictate ſuch an expedient, in the vain hope of ſupporting popularity by exhibiting himſelf at the head of an *unexampled* majority in Parliament. But Mr. *Pitt*, young as he is, may himſelf remember a Miniſter who had never been ſo ſtrong *in Parliament* as but a very ſhort time before he was driven from the helm, with threats of impeachment.

There is yet another poſſible caſe which the condition of our Boroughs ſuggeſts. Suppoſe a prince to aſcend the throne with an abſolute ſelf-command in expence, and with the crafty, undermining talents of Henry the Seventh: ſuch a King, with ſuch means as would be in his hands, would not be long in ſecuring to the Crown all the ſaleable Boroughs now open; and in prevailing on the Borough-holders, one by one, to ſell him the cloſe ones; until the Crown itſelf ſhould have in its own hands the power of taxing the people, and under forms that muſt render its deſpotiſm infinitely more oppreſſive, than if ſimple, viſible monarchy, were the acknowledged government of the country.—

And

And is not this alone an argument for reforming our Repreſentation, which in the mind of every rational man muſt be irreſiſtible?

But I have not yet done quoting.——The ſame Mr. *Pitt*, to whom Gentlemen look up with ſuch unbounded confidence, —— "The "matter of complaint," ſays he, "is clear to me; "and I am ſtrengthened in opinion from the ad- "vice of ſome of the firſt and greateſt characters "in the kingdom. It was alſo the opinion of "many reſpectable characters now no more; and "particularly of one, of whom every member in "the Houſe can ſpeak with more freedom than "myſelf. That perſon," [the Earl of *Chatham*] "was not apt to indulge vague and chimerical "ſpeculations, inconſiſtent with practice and ex- "diency. I perſonally know, that it was the opi- "nion of this perſon, *that without recurring to firſt "principles in this reſpect*, and eſtabliſhing *a more "ſolid and equal Repreſentation of the People*, by "which the proper conſtitutional connection "ſhould be revived, this nation, with the beſt ca- "pacities for grandeur and happineſs of any on the "face of the earth, muſt be confounded with the "maſs of thoſe *whoſe liberties were loſt* in the Cor- "ruption of the People."*

* This and the foregoing quotations are extracts from the Miniſter's Speech, *before he was Miniſter*, viz. 18th May, 1782.

In

In my humble eſtimation, this is a *danger* demanding our ſerious attention. Now, Gentlemen, with *France* we are already at war; and therefore we know the worſt of offending her, by excluding her agents from our Houſe of Commons. And as to the *Nabob of Arcott*, if we ſhould offend his Highneſs by the Reform, perhaps the vigour to be derived from the meaſure itſelf, and his great diſtance from us, may ſhield us from the effects of his indignation.

Well, Gentlemen, I have in vain ſought for the *danger* of reforming our *Repreſentation*, and I cannot find it. When we ſhall have plucked the *one hundred and fifty-four* of their peacock feathers, and ſhewn them to be nothing but ſo many ridiculous jays, will *they* make war upon the people of England? Will *they* overturn our good government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons?*

O,—but it now preſents itſelf——Here, Gentlemen, it is——'When the Boroughs, and the 'Counties, in which they lie, ſhall equally par-'take of the rights of election, and thus the Repre-'ſentation ſhall be ſpread over the country, and 'fairly divided amongſt the people of Great Bri-'tain, they will thenceforward chooſe none but 'the moſt indigent, unprincipled, profligate Con-'ſpirators againſt the Conſtitution, and enemies of 'all ſocial order and good government.' But *why?*

why?——'Becauſe our Counties, *which are now* 'the *only elective bodies reſembling ſuch as are here* 'ſuppoſed, always did chooſe ſuch men, and no 'other; and becauſe all the *fifteen* Repreſentative 'Aſſemblies of the American States are uniformly 'compoſed of none but men of theſe deſcriptions.' —Theſe muſt be reaſons, or there can be none.

XII. But let us have done, Gentlemen, with combating theſe drivellings of Folly, and the abſurdities which Corruption is not aſhamed to utter!

Nor is it only on this ſubject of *danger from Reforming* that our underſtandings are thus complimented: according to theſe children of Corruption, all reaſoning from cauſe to effect goes for nothing; and it will, *as they affect to ſay*, make no difference whatever in the *conduct* of your Houſe of Commons, when it ſhall be elected by the nation at large, and for ſhort periods. It now acts, *they ſay*, and *they ſpeak feelingly*, as it ought to do; and then it can act no better.

Then let us ſee how it *has* acted. Perhaps we ſhall find that it could ſcarcely have acted worſe. —From the very origin of our hiſtory and government, down to the Revolution (an event ſo recent, that probably there are perſons now living who were at that time born), arbitrary PREROGATIVE had not

not burthened the nation with *a ſingle million* of debt*.

The nation now groans under the enormous burthen of nearly FOUR HUNDRED MILLIONS; and its annual expence in ſupport of all its eſtabliſhments exceeds *the rental of the whole iſland!* and all this within the life-time of *one long-lived man!*

This ruinous prodigality increaſes in a ratio which no improvements, no poſſible exertions of human induſtry, without a Reform in the Legiſlature, can counteract. Many who are now preſent are much older than myſelf, for I am but juſt entering the vale of years; and yet we, the people of this country, are now taxed above *twelve millions a year* MORE than we were taxed when I attained the years of manhood!

To what does the nation owe this millſtone of taxation hanging on its neck, but to a Parliament in which it is *not* repreſented? Can there be a truth more evident, than that it "is owing preciſely to "the Houſe of Commons NOT ſpeaking the will "of the people." And if this were the proper time, I would demonſtrate that the three wars, which within this laſt period have cauſed all this expence, were abſolutely and totally unneceſſary on account

* At the Revolution it was only 664,263l. See *Sinclair on the Revenue*, Part II. 93.

of *the nation*; and were embarked in for the ſiniſter purpoſes of *corrupt rulers*.

With ſuch facts, Gentlemen, ſtaring you in the face, how will you believe me when I ſay there are men bold enough—audacious enough, ought I not to ſay?—to maintain, and others weak enough to believe, that if the Houſe of Commons did actually repreſent the nation, the ruin of the nation would be the conſequence.

That is, Gentlemen, all your eſtates, all your farms, and all your commercial concerns being under the care of yourſelves, or of perſons whom you appoint for what duration of time you think fit, and can diſmiſs at your pleaſure, you are doubtleſs, *for theſe very reaſons*, in the high road to ruin and bankruptcy.

But if you would take this matter into your ſerious conſideration, and could prevail on the worthy and independent electors of *Grantham* or *Grimſby* to have the goodneſs to appoint your ſtewards, your clerks, managers and ſervants, for terms of *ſeven years at a time*, with full power over your whole property, and your purſes at their diſpoſal, yourſelves *ſurrendering all right whatever of removing the perſons ſo appointed*, that then your affairs would aſſuredly proſper, and your fortunes would ſoon be made. In ſhort, *as the excellence of the Houſe of Commons*,

Commons, according to theſe excellent reaſoners, *conſiſts in* NOT *repreſenting the people*; ſo the perfection of your ſeveral eſtabliſhments of ſtewards and ſervants ſhould conſiſt in their being appointed by *ſomebody* elſe, compelled or bribed by *another ſomebody*, to appoint them for you!

If you are convinced, Gentlemen, by this Court reaſoning, you will of courſe ſee the folly of which you are now guilty, in troubling yourſelves about chooſing County Members.

If the leſs the Houſe of Commons repreſents us, the better it will protect us, and if we wiſh to be guided by the wiſdom and virtue of our preſent rulers, we had better at once transfer our choice of Repreſentatives to ſome ſnug little Borough, which is the ſort of repreſentation they think beſt for us. The Borough of *Gatton*, which has already returned to the enſuing Parliament one of your preſent Candidates, (which by the way might ſave you the trouble of chooſing him over again) would be ready enough, I doubt not, to return for you either or both of the other two alſo, if it would oblige you.

But, Gentlemen, little as the advocates of corruption are capable of bluſhing for the perpetual inſults they offer to your reaſon on theſe ſubjects, I ſhould be aſhamed to ſpend another minute in the refutation of ſuch nonſenſe. It would be an affront

to you to ſuppoſe it neceſſary; it would diſgrace myſelf to think ſo injuriouſly of you. Then let us caſt from us with diſdain the ſhackles which theſe our greateſt enemies, and who have the audacity to treat us as ideots, are perpetually preparing for us —even for our very minds. Think for yourſelves. Diſtruſt whatever they ſay, and ſearch it to the bottom. But moſt diſtruſt, when with hypocritical pretences to *loyalty*, and ſolemn grimace, they cant about our *happy Conſtitution*; for then you may be ſure they mean to betray you. To *us* they hold up a Government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*; but *they themſelves* are faithleſs to all three. That Conſtitution which is the object of their profeſſed adoration, they treat as other corrupters treat the objects of their praiſe and adulation. They extol its virtues to undermine its principles: and they moſt flatter at the moment when they betray. In ſhort, when rightly informed, we perceive, that, inſtead of enjoying the benefits of our threefold Conſtitution, and living in freedom under King, Lords, and Commons, we find the yoke of theſe men's tyranny ſitting heavy on our necks.

Conſidering the clear principles of our Conſtitution, and the fund of political knowledge to be found in our books, arduous no doubt, but not impoſſible, is the taſk of reducing this country to ſlavery. It can only be effected through the corruption of Parliament. Credit has been given to ſome

ſome eminent men for this obſervation; but indeed it is a propoſition ſufficiently evident. And there is another which is equally common, and no leſs juſt; that the beſt things, when corrupted, become the moſt noxious.

In no caſe can this be ſo ſtrongly exemplified, as as in the caſe of a National Repreſentative. In a ſtate of purity, it is the nouriſhment, in a ſtate of corruption, the bane of freedom. A corrupt Repreſentative Aſſembly, of all ſources of univerſal venality and baſeneſs in a nation, is *the moſt prolific*; —as an inſtrument of *oppreſſive taxation*, not *Turkey* itſelf has any thing to compare to it;—for overwhelming political reaſon, truth and principle with a deluge of deluſions, as the ancient world was overwhelmed and loſt in a flood of waters, here are "*the fountains of the great deep*;"—and of all the engines for uprooting the liberties of a nation, and rearing an immoveable pyramid of deſpotiſm, a corrupt Repreſentative Aſſembly is the moſt dreadfully compleat. Such an engine it is which theſe canting hypocrites mean we ſhould leave in THEIR hands, when they talk to us about the Conſtitution, and about "the Legiſlature, Rule, and Government *now* "*duly and happily eſtabliſhed* in this kingdom *."

If, therefore, we would be free, we muſt reject the mummery of repeating cabaliſtic ſentences about

* *See the Indictment of Hardy, &c.*

" *King, Lords,* and *Commons,*" without annexing ideas to the words; but we must take care to have the substance of such a government.

If we would be free, we must not content ourselves with a *King of Straw,* such as the King of this country must be, when the solid sovereignty, wrested from *his* grasp, shall be in the hands of the ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOUR, who have seized on the purse and power of the nation: but we must support the honour and independence of our Sovereign.

If we would be free, we must not permit our Nobles to pollute and degrade themselves with Borough contamination; but we must confine them, *in matters of legislation,* to their own House.

But, above all, if we would be free, WE MUST HAVE A HOUSE OF COMMONS—a House representing the People, and the People only!

If such a Representation do not belong to us, are we not mocked and dealt with as children?—If such a Representation do not belong to us, it is time we burnt our *Blackstones,* our *Lockes,* and every respectable author who has written on the English Constitution. If such a Representation be no part of that Constitution, how long, think you, will it stand the shocks it has to abide, as soon as peace,

peace, and *the repreſentative government of France*, ſhall have healed the wounds of that country, and confirmed its liberties!

If we are to be told, that all we find in our books, all we have been trained up to believe, all the convictions of our underſtandings, and all the feelings of our hearts, in favour of our birth-right, to be fairly and ſubſtantially repreſented in Parliament, are dreams and illuſions; that no ſuch right exiſts, nor will any ſuch expectations be indulged; how long will the Engliſh Conſtitution, whatever it be, ſupport itſelf againſt PUBLIC OPINION?—Will not that PUBLIC OPINION draw ſtrength from thoſe countries where Repreſentation is the very eſſence of the governments, and the acknowledged baſis of Liberty?

And can thoſe who ſee ſo much *danger* from a Reform in the Repreſentation, ſee none in this proſpect? If, forſaken by every ally, and utterly unable any longer to diſturb the internal repoſe of *France*, we ſhould be refuſed peace! and a protracted war, with all its burthens, its bloodſhed, its calamities and horrors, ſhould at length diſguſt a worn-out People; and they ſhould attribute their miſeries to a corrupt Houſe of Commons; will not ſuch conſiderations give a keener ſenſe to the want of Repreſentation?

And what other changes ſuch things, and events paſſing on the great theatre of the world, *may* make in PUBLIC OPINION, it behoves the Friends of the Engliſh Conſtitution, and thoſe in particular who affect ſo many fears for Royalty and Nobility, well to conſider; and I wiſh they would conſider: and, in particular, I wiſh all theſe matters to ſink deep into the hearts of our Repreſentatives.

I will not cloſe theſe obſervations, Gentlemen, without recommending it to you, when next invited by Mr. *Reeves* to ſubſcribe a Deed of Aſſociation, to beware of forgeries, and not to ſign without examination, leſt you be tricked into pledging your ſupport—not to a government according to our Conſtitution—but to one of empty forms, fraud, and corruption. Nor can I take leave of the ſubject, without diſtinctly expreſſing what I fear, and what I hope.

XIII. If, Gentlemen, I poſſeſs the ſmalleſt portion of foreſight, a greater election than this now upon the carpet is not far diſtant; and one in which three Candidates, as at preſent, will be preſented to your choice. When you conſider the facts, touching your own Conſtitution, which I have laid before you; when you reflect, that there are "tides in the affairs of men," when Public Opinion becomes irreſiſtible; *and have you not ſeen it ſweep from before your eyes the vaſt Monarchy of France,*

France, with all its ſupporters? And when you ruminate on that deep mental commotion which now agitates every enlightened nation, and indicates far greater changes at hand than the partial and imperfect change, which, near three centuries ago, a former agitation in Europe produced, when the corruptions of the Roman Church received ſuch a ſhock from the Reformation; can you imagine that the Conſtitution of England can long reſt upon its preſent rotten pillars? or that it can be long ere you will have to make your election between *ſettled Deſpotiſm*, *Revolution*, or *Parliamentary Reform?* Or can I doubt on which of theſe you will fix your choice? No, Gentlemen, I have no doubt; and hence the gloomy fears, which ſometime takes poſſeſſion of my mind, give place to a joyful hope, whenever the idea of Reform occurs. And happy ſhall I be to hear any of our Candidates expreſs a purpoſe of aſſiſting to realize that hope—the grand conſolation of my life, and the anchor which preſerves the tranquillity of my boſom in theſe tempeſtuous times.

XIV. If, Gentlemen, the importance of my matter in a ſufficient degree make up to you for my own deficiencies in placing that matter before you; and if you can ſtill take an intereſt in liſtening to what I wiſh to ſubmit to your conſideration, now will be the time for recalling to your recollection what I intimated concerning the *three wars*, which have

have cauſed us—the People of this Country—to be *now taxed above twelve Millions a year* MORE *than we were taxed when I was a young man.*

Your countenances, Gentlemen, ſeem to conſent. I will proceed.

Conſidering how the nation, and the honeſt part of the national repreſentatives, have been uniformly cajoled and duped into the undertaking of wars; and conſidering that, in conſequence of the funding ſyſtem, war has totally changed its effects upon the State; inaſmuch as while it uſed to be waged by ſuperfluous money raiſed within the year, it was oft compared to a medical bleeding, ſalutary to the health of a plethoric patient; whereas now it is the burſting of a blood-veſſel, every return exhauſting more than the former, and its dreadful frequency threatening the body politic with ſpeedy diſſolution. Conſidering, I ſay, theſe things; and that war and taxes are the natural and bitter fruit of that Corruption I have laboured to expoſe; it is highly expedient that we now confer with each other and with our Candidates on this ſubject, as it furniſhes ſo invincible an argument, if a new one were wanting, in favour of reforming our Repreſentation.

The review on which I am going to enter carries us back only to the eve of the preſent reign, which

which commenced during the firſt of the wars on which I have to remark.

In 1755 the national debt ſtood at 74,500,000l. and all the increaſe ſince that time has been cauſed by three wars—the war of 1756, the American war, and the preſent war. Each of the two former was, in its day, called "juſt and neceſſary." I will examine them firſt, before I come to that in which we are now engaged. The examination will be ſhort; but I muſt premiſe, that the immeaſurable means which Miniſters poſſeſs of *corrupting the Public Opinion*, enable them at any time, *for a ſeaſon*, to eſtabliſh any doctrine, however untrue; any principle, however unjuſt; any propoſition, however abſurd; and, I muſt obſerve, that, in this uſe of their ruinous influence, *there is even more perdition than in their corruption of Parliament*; and that the nation is never *undeceived* on theſe occaſions by time, by reaſon, by experience, and calamity, until it is TOO LATE!

By conſulting *the Political, Miſcellaneous, and Philoſophical Pieces of Dr. Franklin*, and turning to the account of "a Congreſs held at Albany, in "1754, to conſider of the beſt means of defend-"ing the King's dominions in *America*, &c. it "will be ſeen that *Engliſh America thought itſelf* "*ſufficiently able to cope with the French* without "further aſſiſtance;" and that there was tranſmitted

ted to *England* the plan of an union of the Colonies for that purpoſe; the eſtabliſhment of which by act of Parliament was *humbly ſolicited.*

Now, inſtead of proclaiming to the nation the excellent plan of American ſelf-defence, and the happineſs of finding it practicable, through the virtue of the Colonies, to preſerve the mother-country in peace, the knowledge of the ſelf-defending plan was *carefully ſuppreſſed*; and, by means of that dreadful influence which Miniſters poſſeſs, the whole country reſounded with the *neceſſity* of going to war.

Inſtead of ſending to America an *act of Parliament*, that would have coſt the nation *eighteenpence*, we ſent an *army*, which, with what followed, laid on us a burthen of *ſeventy-two millions ſterling.* Inſtead of confining the diſagreement to the *Colonies*, and by a ſimple and natural proceſs extinguiſhing the ſparks of war where they firſt appeared, we blew theſe ſparks into a flame, and ſpread it all over the globe; and, through the bleſſed preponderancy of *Hanoverian* intereſts on our politics, we had "*to conquer America in Germany.*"

As French encroachment on our back ſettlements in America was the cauſe of the war, why did we not permit the Colonies themſelves to repel that in their own way, and at their own expence, *as they propoſed,*

propoſed, and humbly ſolicited to be permitted to do? —Had this wiſe confidence been ſhewn the Colonies, and had this prudent policy been adopted, inſtead of aiming at wreſting from France her own Colony of *Canada*, the conſequences to have been naturally expected were theſe;—that the expence and uſeleſſneſs of offenſive war to *the Colonies* would have confined them to *defenſive operations*; that the Canadian French, finding they could not extend their own ſettlements in one direction, except by the ſword, would have extended them in other directions, *where every thing invited, and nothing oppoſed them:* and that neither of the two mother countries having reaſon to fear her Colonies being wreſted from her by the other, *the cauſe of war would have been done away.*

Here, then, we ſee in our Cabinet a *deſpicable ſyſtem* of colonial government; a *corrupt principle*, preventing an anxious attention to the ineſtimable bleſſing of *peace*, with a *ſuppreſſion* of facts, and a *circulation* of falſhoods, in order to obtain a WAR. That war, then, we are warranted in pronouncing UNNECESSARY.

With regard to the American war, every one knows that its object was to *ſubject the Colonies to be taxed by a Britiſh Parliament in which they were* NOT *repreſented.* Was it not evident, then, that to draw the ſword againſt ſo clear a principle of political

political juſtice in general, and a principle ſo prominent, and ſo diſtinguiſhed in our own Conſtitution in particular, was the very height of iniquity? ——Need I ſay more to prove it was UNNECESSARY?

But look back to the origin and progreſs of that abominable war, and behold the peſtilential effects of corrupt influence, *in corrupting Public Opinion!* Behold, the ſame arts of Miniſters we have *now again* witneſſed; the ſame acrimonious abuſe of *the whole nation* to be warred on, as we have ſo lately heard; the ſame factious and corrupt perverſion of political principles; and, in ſhort, the ſame ſenſeleſs jargon, as muſt, on all occaſions, be uſed to inflame and irritate a nation into an unfounded reſentment, in order to involve it in an unneceſſary War!

With what compaſſion, mingled with contempt, muſt our kindred in *America*, who timely reſiſted the unconſtitutional pretenſions of an unconſtitutional Houſe of Commons over themſelves, look down upon this nation, now once more the ſport and prey of the ſame ſort of impoſtors as plunged it into that war with themſelves! And what muſt be the feelings of that diſcerning people, who ſo ſucceſsfully ſtruggled to eſtabliſh their own liberties on *popular Repreſentation*, when they behold the people of this country inſulted by the very underlings

in the ranks of Corruption with doctrines, which in *America* would brand with infamy thoſe who uttered them, and ſtigmatiſe with baſeneſs thoſe who ſhould hear them without indignation!

What would Britiſh Americans ſay, if told it would be an excellence in their Aſſemblies NOT to ſpeak their will? or that thoſe Aſſemblies might be *lopped off*, and caſt into the fire, without deſtroying their Conſtitutions?

Pardon this digreſſion, which the painful remembrance of the *American* war has drawn from me!

So much, then, for the war of 1756, and the American war; as well as for the vulgar arts, and coarſe impoſtures, by means of which a nation that has no adequate or rational Repreſentation is lured to it's own deſtruction. We now come to the War in which we are at preſent engaged.

With regard to this War, we muſt examine it under two diſtinct ſuppoſitions. Firſt, under that which ariſes from conſidering *the objects of it* to have been thoſe which have been held out in Parliament and State Papers; and then under a different point of view. Under the firſt ſuppoſition, then, behold our Rulers, with the means in their hands of preſerving the collective force and the high

high reputation of their country entire; of daily augmenting its ſtrength, whilſt that of rival States was in a courſe of diminution; and of preſerving a wiſe and reſpected neutrality favourable to every Britiſh intereſt; Britain reſpected and courted by all nations, and having the ultimate option of the beſt alliances for her permanent ſecurity. Behold, in the firſt place, theſe Rulers with theſe means in their hands, duped by an old woman, whoſe ſhare in the war has coſt her only a few manifeſtoes; and then behold them, in the next place, daſhing againſt a rock the full-blown fortunes of this nation, with the frantic folly of the verieſt children in politics that ever warred againſt nature through ignorance or ungoverned paſſion. Behold, I ſay, theſe things, and our Rulers muſt appear to be mere madmen!

But examine their conduct in another view, and than it will appear in another light: then, alone, however defective in fidelity to their country, or in political penetration, it will be found natural and conſiſtent. View them, then, as USURPERS——I am ſpeaking of the Borough-holding Faction, for they are our Rulers—as men who have ſeized on the Sovereignty of their country, and who ſaw that Sovereignty endangered by the principles of Reform; and then, as I have ſaid, their conduct will appear neither unnatural, nor inconſiſtent; for we are warranted, by the hiſtory of all USURPERS, in concluding

concluding, that the wreck of a nation's proſperity, liberty, and happineſs, muſt be conſidered by them as amongſt the ordinary means of attaining their ends; and that no effuſion of human blood, no extermination of the human ſpecies, can be too great, or too horrible, to check them in the career of their ambition.

As to the real intention of the War, I have already produced an unqueſtionable witneſs to put the caſe beyond all reaſoning, by giving *direct evidence of the fact*. Has he not depoſed as to *this object?* Has he not told you, in very plain Engliſh, that that object was to ſuppreſs *a Parliamentary Reform?* To his teſtimonies we cannot refuſe credit. He is to be conſidered as the Secretary to the Faction; their Inſtrument, and the Maker of their Manifeſtoes. He is the Reporter of what they have done, and *why* they have done it; and the Herald, alſo, of what they *intend* to do. He told us we muſt have *War*: we had War. He told us that Reformers muſt be *proſecuted:* they were proſecuted. He told us that Engliſhmen ought *to be forbidden to meet* to ſeek a redreſs of grievances: their meetings *were* as nearly forbidden as his Maſters dare go at the firſt ſtep.*

* He told us, alſo, that when the *Preſs* maintains the true principles of liberty, it is a licentiouſneſs that ought not to be allowed. See *Example of France*, &c. p. 164, 174, 81. See alſo *The Commonwealth in Danger, Introd.* 165, for a criticiſm on his attack on the Liberty of the Preſs.

And has not this conduct, from the commencement of their fraudful alarms to this moment, been one unbroken chain of circumſtantial evidence in corroboration of his teſtimony, which is ſo direct? —Who have theſe Miniſters repreſented as enemies of their country, and traitors? Who have they perſecuted throughout the country? What was it expoſed to their vengeance men ſo exemplary in their lives and morals as *Winterbottom*, *Palmer*, and *Muir?* And whoſe lives did they attempt at the Old Bailey, while it was hoped the phrenzy of alarm had not ſubſided? And was it not the driſt of the Reporter of their Committee of Secreſy, and of the Indictments, the Pleadings, and the whole legal proceedings that followed, to impreſs upon the public the abſurd, the monſtrous ideas, that to maintain "*there is no redreſs for a* "*nation circumſtanced as we are, but in a fair, free,* "*and full Repreſentation of the People,** IS SEDITION! and to aſſociate for obtaining a Reform in Parliament IS HIGH TREASON!

Upon the whole, I muſt needs think the evidence to ſhew, that to quaſh a Reform in the Repreſentation, and completely to eſtabliſh the Sovereignty in the Borough-holders, were the prime and main objects of the War, is irreſiſtible.

* See this paſſage made particularly conſpicuous in the Firſt Report of the Committee of Secreſy, by capital letters and a large type.

Reviewing,

Reviewing, then, this War under the firſt of our ſuppoſitions, we find it, from the exceſs of its folly, utterly inexplicable; but when we ſee it in its true light, the myſtery clears up. We then perceive it was not without a deep deſign; we perfectly underſtand the uſes of the alarms, the frauds, and the deluſions we have witneſſed; and we alſo diſcover the *neceſſity* there was for a perſecution of honeſt men. We ſee, in ſhort, that the proper denomination of this War is——THE ROTTEN BOROUGH WAR!—and that ſuch is the mad luſt of dominion with which its authors are ſtung, that, rather than miſs the gratification of that luſt, they would ſacrifice half the human race. Merely to ſay, then, that ſuch a War was UNNECESSARY, were to ſpeak of it with an inſenſibility, at which my whole ſoul revolts!

View, O my Countrymen, its patricide principle—the Slavery of your Country its very object! —Attend to the horrid maxims, to the perſecutions, to the ſtatutes it has brought forth; count, if you can, the millions it is ſtill adding to your oppreſſive burthens; conceive, if you can, the madneſs of the attempts it has produced, to reenſlave the moſt numerous, and moſt military nation of Europe, in the very moment of proud exultation at having broken its chains;——ſeriouſly reflect on the havoc of human beings in the unhallowed conteſt; look to the very extinction of the

Britiſh empire and name, to which, if not timely prevented, it directly leads; and then ſay, if ſuch a war do not merit your deepeſt execration! Good God! What a malignant peſtilence is here ſeen to ariſe from thoſe deadly pools, the corrupt Boroughs, and to be wafted eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth, for man's deſtruction, far as the earth extends, or the winds of Heaven can blow!

Behold, my countrymen, the ſituation to which you are on the point of being reduced. Of all your late confederates one only lingers in field; and by every mail you expect to hear of freſh humiliations. Totally ſtripped of his Belgic and Italian dominions, if he do not ſhortly ſave by negociation his diſpirited armies, conſequences ſtill more fatal may befal him.

But where are your other numerous companions in the war?—Where are *Pruſſia*, *Hanover*, *Heſſe*, and the reſt of the co-eſtates of *Germany*?—Where are *Spain*, *Sardinia*, *Naples*, *Tuſcany*, *His Holineſs*, and the Dukes and Princes of *Italy*, who filled up the long muſter-roll of your allies?—Are they not all at the feet of that enemy whoſe territory, in their vain imaginations, was to have been parcelled out amongſt them, and whoſe ſpoil was to have been taken as their certain prey?—And where is the mighty Miſtreſs of the North; whoſe men of iron were to have hewn their way to Paris?—In her Cabinet;

Cabinet; legiſlating for POLAND, and, with a contemptuous ſneer, thanking fooliſh *Britain* for her wicked ſervices.

Belgium and Holland, now united to *France*, have raiſed the population of the Republic to above *forty millions* of people; the Dutch navy is become French, and that of *Spain* but too likely to unite its force againſt you.

But the moſt ſerious conſideration is yet to come. By that time the Imperial armies may reviſit their native lands, you may expect to ſee thoſe of *France* arranged along the coaſt from the *Garonne* to the *Texel*, preparing for deſcent *en maſs* upon this iſland, in as many points perhaps as we have maritime counties!

But we are ſuperior, you ſay, at ſea. True; I grant we are. And was not the navy of *England* ſuperior to that of *Normandy*, when *William the Firſt* FOUND HIS WAY TO LAND, and conquered the iſland? And was it not again ſuperior to that of *Holland*, when *William the Third* brought over that army into this country, which enabled him to aſcend the throne? And ſo lately as 1779, did not the combined fleets of *France* and *Spain* arrive undiſturbed off *Plymouth* and *Torbay*, while that of England was off *Ireland* or *Scilly*?—And did not Earl *Howe*, with a much inferior force to that of the

enemy, throw ſuccours into *Gibraltar?*—A navy, then, is a mere moving outwork, that, although not beaten, may be eluded.

In the preſent comparative ſituations of *England* and *France*, it is not on ſuch an uncertain outwork you muſt depend. Miniſters muſt be removed; Parliament muſt be reformed; the nation muſt be armed.

I do not ſay all theſe things muſt be done before you can have peace; for to grant you peace *may* be the policy of *France*, for the ſake of *preſent* internal repoſe. But there are ſtrong reaſons for apprehending that peace with *England*, all other enemies being ſubdued, *may not* be the policy of the French Government. Suppoſing, however, the former; ſtill woe be to *England*, if, having made peace with *France* under her preſent circumſtances, and preſent inſtitutions of Government, ſhe do not make proviſion for rendering that peace permanent and SAFE; by driving from the helm a ſet of men who, under the denomination of Miniſters to the *King*, are in truth the Miniſters of his and his people's greateſt enemies; by reforming Parliament; and by arming the nation.

Can you any longer, my countrymen, truſt your preſervation in the hands of thoſe, who, for purpoſes the moſt criminal towards *you*, have been the main

actors in bringing all *Europe* into its preſent ſituation, and yourſelves into your preſent danger? Seeing, in the tragic ſcenes of this hateful war, the wide-waſting miſchiefs of corruption, and what mighty evils ſpring from minute cauſes, can we think ourſelves ſafe while a corrupt Borough remains unreformed? And can the defence of this iſland, againſt the fourteen enthuſiaſtic armies that have brought combined Europe to their feet, be truſted to all the mercenaries that all our remaining money can pay? Can any thing on earth, but *our nation in arms*, oppoſe that *armed nation* that comes againſt us?*

Ere it be too late, then, let us aſſemble in our counties, and in our diſtricts, and reaſon and ſpeak, and act, reſpecting theſe high concerns, as becomes free men! Let us try what the voice of the people will do, towards perſuading our Prince to put from him evil counſellors, and towards perſuading Parliament to put us in poſſeſſion of that repreſentation which is our birth-right. Inconſiſtent as it may be with *theoretic* principles, and mortifying as it muſt be to men who know their rights, yet, the domeſtic peace of our country ought never to be forgotten; and in reſpect towards thoſe FORMS we wiſh to be held in perpetual reverence amongſt us,

* This advice is not the effect of *preſent* alarm. Corrupt Counſels may reject the meaſure; but unleſs the Government of *France* ſhall again fall to pieces, delay will only endanger our exiſtence as a nation.

let us proceed by PETITION to that Houſe, which we muſt reform or periſh!

You have ſeen, my countrymen, the many miracles which a love of liberty has enabled Frenchmen to perform. One miracle alone is reſerved for us. It is to transform the poiſonous Bohon-Upas * of our country into a ſalutary fig-tree; under the ſhade of which we may at laſt repoſe in ſecurity, where *none ſhall make us afraid.* Let us ſecure but our liberties from domeſtic poiſon, and inſtead of arming the dependents of ariſtocracy againſt the nation, arm the nation againſt invaders †, and we ſhall then have nothing to fear from foreign force. *France* has hitherto conquered only Kings, and tyrants, and mercenary armies. She neither has

* "Fell Upas ſits the Hydra-tree of death,
"Lo! from one root the envenom'd ſoil below,
"A thouſand vegetative ſerpents grow."

The account given by an ingenious Dutchman of the Bohon-Upas, or poiſon-tree of Java, the effluvia of which deſolates all the country around, "affording a ſcene of melancholy beyond what "poets have deſcribed or painters delineated," ſeems to be a political allegory, repreſenting deſpotiſm and its melancholy effects; and the poet here, by his "envenom'd ſoil," and his growth of "ſerpents," glances no doubt at our noxious Boroughs and their deadly brood, ſeeing with prophetic eye the deſolating deſpotiſm of which the Borough Faction is the root.

See Loves of the Plants, Cant. III. p. 110.

† So far as the Borough-holders armed on *the principle* of their own war, as a war *againſt reform*, they armed againſt the nation. The troops themſelves were doubtleſs unconſcious of the impoſition.

con-

conquered, nor can ſhe conquer, a FREE PEOPLE! If true to herſelf, ſhe cannot wiſh it.

The conſideration of the preſent war, pregnant with ſo many horrible principles, ſo many injuries to the people, ſo many unhappy conſequences to mankind, and with ſo much juſt alarm to this country, has, I perceive, Gentlemen, drawn me into a greater length and diverſity of remark than I intended; and in its contemplation I confeſs that I had well-nigh forgotten, that it is only one of the three wars on which I had undertaken to ſpeak. I will therefore now ſum up, in order, the pecuniary miſchiefs of all the three, and diſmiſs the topic.

1. The *Back-Settlement* war found us under a burthen of nearly *ſeventy-four* MILLIONS, *ſix hundred thouſand pounds:*

After *ſeven* years of *unwiſe* and *unneceſſary* warfare, it left us indebted about *one hundred and forty-ſix* MILLIONS, *ſeven hundred thouſand pounds.*

2. The *American* war found our debt nearly *one hundred and thirty-ſix* MILLIONS:

After a *ſeven*-years perſeverance in the *iniquity* of attempting to eſtabliſh taxation where there was no repreſentation; and in the *folly* of endeavouring to govern by *force* a whole continent of men with *Engliſh*

Engliſh minds, and placed beyond "the vaſt Atlan-"tic," it left us indebted above *two hundred and fifty-ſeven* MILLIONS.

How the *Rotten Borough* war at its commencement found our debt, I am not accurately informed; it ſhould ſeem from the ſtatements of *Sir John Sinclair* down to 1790, to have been at the commencement of the war conſiderably under *two hundred and forty* MILLIONS *; but Mr. *Morgan* tells us, that in January laſt, when we had only then been *three* years warring *againſt Reform in England* †, and "*to reſtore abſolutely and unequivocally in France* "*the old Government, with terrors in its train* †, it had amounted to above *three hundred and ſixty* MILLIONS; ſo that, according to the ratio of accumulation, were it poſſible to continue the war *three* years longer, we might expect the debt by that time to ſwell to *ſix hundred* MILLIONS at leaſt.

Conſidering the preſent poſture of affairs, and the movements of *Spain* on the ſide of *Gibraltar*, we certainly can neither limit the pecuniary evils of the preſent war to their amount at this day, nor reckon on a very ſpeedy concluſion of the conteſt. It ought alſo to be obſerved, that, in the ſhape of mere debts and taxes, we by no means ſee all the pecuniary evils of war; for had all the commercial *increaſe*

* *Hiſtory of the Revenue*, Part II. 93.

† See p. 33.

of

of expence, *loſs*, and *damage* in the three UNNECESSARY wars under conſideration been avoided; had all the *annihilated* millions, ſunk in debt, been *productively employed* by the people in agriculture, manufactures and trade; and had our population "*killed off*" in war, been augmented by induſtry and peace; more millions would probably have been *added* to the national wealth in the laſt forty years, than have been thus extracted in the ſhape of debts and taxes; making the true balance againſt the nation more than double its debt in that period of time.

Such is the *æconomy* of UNNECESSARY WAR!

XV. It has been remarked, Gentlemen, that the county of *Lincoln*, until of late, has been unmindful of public concerns; but that it now begins to feel its own conſequence, and to take that part and intereſt in national politics which becomes it. I truſt it does feel its own conſequence. I truſt it does feel for the Conſtitution, the liberties, the honour of England. And I truſt that thoſe united feelings will ever preſerve it in future from being treated like a venal Borough, or being made a ſtepping-block to raiſe vain, or inſignificant, or ſervile men, to the gaudy honours of the peerage.

If

If report ſays true, the Treaſury has been already canvaſſed by one of the Candidates for repreſenting this county. If report ſays true, Court influence, and Court duplicity have both been at work, in favour of the friend of "a ſtrong and ſteady Go-"vernment." I am glad of it. To gain an election, in the preſent ſtate of repreſentation, is to gain nothing. But to gain a knowledge of the principles and objects of our rulers; of the arts by which they undermine public liberty, and defeat the exertions of independence; of the attempts they make to intimidate, or to betray, or to ſell even the largeſt counties; and of the deplorable condition of that abſurd and wretched ſyſtem under which *all Engliſh elections of Legiſlators* is made;—to gain, I ſay, all this knowledge, is to gain much.

If I am rightly informed, Gentlemen, this county, according to its territorial extent and population, is entitled to elect SEVENTEEN Members. As a county, it elects *two*. There are indeed *eight* other Members returned *within* the county, as there are *above forty* returned *within* Cornwall, excluſive of the Members *for* that county. Now, of the *eight* Members returned for Boroughs within the county of *Lincoln*, ſix of them owe their ſeats to "LORDS OF PARLIAMENT; the *ſeventh* owes his, either to a Lord of Parliament, or a private Borough-holder, or to a compromiſe between them; and the *eighth* perhaps

perhaps finds ſome advantage from being favoured with the *whole patronage and influence of Government in a ſea-port town*.

Here, then, Gentlemen, you have a tolerable ſpecimen within your own county of the extenſive benefits of *Patronage and Influence*; and you may in ſome degree judge of the value of the Repreſentation of the COMMONS of *England* in general, by that of the COMMONS of *Lincolnſhire* in particular.

If we wiſh, Gentlemen, for the Independence of Parliament, we muſt wiſh to ſee the Electors in all our Boroughs no longer diſtinct and inſulated bodies in their reſpective Counties, and monopolizing an undue proportion of Repreſentation; but partaking only with the common maſs in a common right, fairly and equally; we muſt wiſh to ſee our Counties themſelves ſubdivided into elective diſtricts, the poll taken by pariſhes, each diſtrict returning its ſeparate Repreſentative, and the whole conducted under a general ſyſtem for preſerving the purity and independence of election. Such a ſyſtem will ſoon be found, when honeſtly looked for.

Under ſuch a ſyſtem, the county of *Lincoln* would have an opportunity of ſecuring, at all times, in its parliamentary ſervice, *ſeventeen of its own independent*

dependent Gentlemen, trained up in its boſom, connected with it by the cloſeſt ties, and intimately acquainted with all its concerns. Nor would a Gentleman ſo elected at all reſemble the automaton of Borough-nomination, who has no will to conſult, no intereſt to protect, but that of the Lord who made him a member of Parliament. In ſuch a vile ſervice there is nothing to kindle a generous thought; nothing to awaken one manly emotion: —the repreſentative is the creature of a Lord, whoſe ſervice is perfect ſlavery.

It is true popular election which creates, which calls forth, which animates and preſerves patriotiſm. It is he who depends on popular election and re-election (eſpecially when it returns at ſhort intervals) that ſtudies with attention the local intereſts of his conſtituents, and applies with ardour to the general intereſts of the State. It is the Choſen-of-the-people—the Real Repreſentative of a numerous body of Real Freemen—who ſo acts on the great theatre of Parliament as to ſecure to himſelf that approbation on which his laudable ambition feeds and depends.*

The

* I have been told of Gentlemen, men particularly conſpicuous as perſons of large property, who, at the late election, through fear of hurting themſelves in their line of buſineſs, gave votes contrary to their known and avowed political ſentiments; and I have heard others acknowledge that, for ſimilar reaſons, they did the ſame

The more, Gentlemen, we meditate on theſe things, before the arrival of that great day of election,

ſame thing. Such men muſt feel how much we are in want of a better ſyſtem.

And are there not in *England* thouſands of *Tenants* who hear their landlords make fine ſpeeches about ſupporting the Conſtitution, and aſſerting the rights of *free* men; but who, at elections, find this freedom to conſiſt in voting againſt their inclinations and conſciences, either for a man whom they verily believe to be an enemy to that Conſtitution, or for one who cares as little about it, as about what paſſes in the moon? If theſe things can and do happen, ſurely they call aloud for a remedy!

One of the reports current on the late occaſion was, that one of the Candidates had lodged in the Lincoln Bank *thirty thouſand pounds*, as a General provides a magazine for the expence of a campaign. Whether this report be accurate or not, is no matter; but it ſeems to be agreed, that a warmly conteſted election would require ſuch a ſum. We know that county conteſts have coſt much larger ſums; embarraſſing, through life, many of theſe men, who, of all others, ought to be independent, and proving the utter ruin of others.

What a commentary is here on *Engliſh* elections! What a chance a county, eſpecially a *large* one, has of obtaining the ſervices of men diſtinguiſhed for prudence, knowledge and talents!—It is high time we borrowed a leaf from the book of *American practice*. When we compare elections *as they are* with elections as they *ought to be*, ſtrong, indeed, is the contraſt! As things *are*, it may occaſion a fever throughout ſuch a county as this of *fifteen days* continuance, and an expence of *ninety* or *one hundred thouſand pounds*, to be ſaddled with TWO Members who may be rich and prodigal enough to ſquander ſuch ſums, and who, it were a million to one, would never have been particularly ſelected for mere merit. As things *ought to be*, an election would not coſt the Elector an *hour*, nor the Candidate a *ſhilling*; while a county of this extent would, of courſe, obtain the intelligent, independent, and diligent

ſervices

tion, which, as I have ſaid, we may expect, the better we ſhall be prepared for protecting in that day the laws and liberties of our country; for averting the horrors of civil diſſention; and for ſaving our poſterity from the degradation, the oppreſſion, the beſtial condition of an enſlaved people.

Some may think I have been digreſſing from the matter before us. I think I have not. All I have ſaid, and more, much more, ought to be conſidered before we elect Repreſentatives at a period like the preſent. I happened to ſay, juſt now, that, in the preſent ſtate of Repreſentation, to gain an election was to gain *nothing*. But that word "nothing" was then figuratively uſed; and I truſt it was not taken literally by thoſe who hear me: for if we could ſucceed in electing a Friend to Parliamentary Reform, inſtead of a Supporter of that Apoſtate Miniſter, who, once the Leader and animated Orator of the Reformers, now attempts to put the cold ſeal of death upon the lips of his more honeſt followers, it would be a happy event.

Several of you, I believe, Gentlemen, have hitherto ſupported that Miniſter. It is high time you examined well the grounds of your ſupport. It is high time you put a continuance of that ſup-

ſervices in Parliament of SEVENTEEN of its Gentlemen moſt diſtinguiſhed for the brightneſs of talent, and the excellence of character.

port

port to ſome conſtitutional, ſome infallible teſt, by which you may judge of its propriety. That teſt is now offered to your uſe.

When I ſpeak of ſupporting, or of oppoſing Miniſters, let me not be miſunderſtood. I combat not in the ſervice of party; nor is there a man on earth, that, with my conſent, ſhould be Miniſter on any other terms than thoſe I would preſcribe to Mr. *Pitt*. Nay, although, in my judgment, and for the reaſons you have heard, he has ſhewn himſelf one of the worſt of human beings, and of courſe perſonally unworthy of national truſt and honours, was he, inſtead of being the Dictator of his Country, ſelected and upheld by the Borough-holding Faction, to do their unhallowed work;—was he, I ſay, inſtead of ſuch a *Dictator*, really Miniſter of the Crown, reſponſible to an independent Parliament, my voice ſhould not be raiſed for his removal, nor heard in his diſpraiſe. To ſuch a Parliament I would leave all Miniſters and their merits. But, in the preſent ſituation of our country, to ſupport a Miniſter, may be to pull down the Conſtitution.

Carry, Gentlemen, this enquiry, I conjure you, into the calm privacy of your cloſets, and there ſearch it to the bottom. Leave at the door thoſe dangerous counſellors Paſſion, Prejudice, and Par-

riality; and let none attend on your meditations but Diligence, Reaſon, and Truth!

XVI. I would to God we had done with the miſchievous jargon of *ſupporting Adminiſtration, ſupporting Oppoſition, ſupporting Government!*—— IT IS OURS TO SUPPORT OUR OWN FREEDOM!— The obvious means——a genuine, uninfluenced choice of Repreſentatives. Thus, alone, it is we can ſupport any government worth ſupporting, or any adminiſtration for the benefit of our country!

To have our elections uninfluenced, they muſt be made by ballot;* to preſerve the purity of Parliament, they muſt be annual: and ſuch alone accord with the rights of Freemen. Let me appeal, my Brethren, to your hearts and underſtandings. —In the preſent ſtate of our elections, did any of you ever feel a conſciouſneſs that his vote was of real conſequence to his country? Under ſuch elections as I have deſcribed, would not every one of you feel the value of his vote? Would not every man's mind feel a conviction that he was fulfilling a duty, on which the independence of Parliament and the happineſs of his country depended? Would not every boſom glow with an animating patriotiſm, and with the conſcious dignity of freedom?

* All Election Committees in the Houſe of Commons are made by ballot.

By certain writers againſt Reform it has been urged, as an objection to ſuch ſubſtantial Repreſentation as I contend for, that Engliſh Repreſentation *never was ſo perfect.* Such reaſoning condemns all paſt, and forbids all future improvement. Such reaſoning would have pronounced *Somerſet*, the Negro, a domeſtic ſlave; becauſe ſuch ſlavery had once exiſted, and had never been forbidden by expreſs ſtatute: but Engliſh Judges, underſtanding the pure *principles* of Engliſh law, pronounced him a free man; thereby eſtabliſhing it as a maxim, as glorious as juſt, that *domeſtic ſlavery* could never more exiſt in Engliſh land. And ſimilar muſt be the effect in regard to *political ſlavery*, as ſoon as the pure principles of the Engliſh Conſtitution ſhall be *underſtood* by and influence our political Judges.

If in ancient times *Repreſentation* was not brought to perfection, ſo neither was *Corruption.* But Repreſentation, ſuch as it was, extorted from the moſt potent Kings a redreſs of grievances before it granted ſupplies. Improvements in the antidote muſt keep pace with improvements in the poiſon, or political death muſt enſue. With Corruption full blown, and Repreſentation only in the bud, Liberty cannot be preſerved.

After the demonſtration, Gentlemen, which has been laid before you, of the ſtate *of our Repreſenta-*

tion, let me ſeriouſly aſk, if, while the Miniſter is, and muſt be, the Creature of the Borough-holders, (whether that Miniſter be Mr. *Pitt*, or Mr. *Fox*; Mr. *Dundas*, or Mr. *Sheridan*; Lord *Grenville*, or Mr. *Grey*;) we can ſupport the Miniſter without deſtroying ourſelves? or can we ſupport the government without deſtroying the Conſtitution?

The plain and ſober truth is, you cannot, Gentlemen, ſupport a government of Borough-holders, and Miniſters who are their dependents, without ſpeedily reducing yourſelves to the mere gilded pageants of their power and pride, to flatter and fawn at their levees, and obſequiouſly to crouch before them, or contemptuouſly to be ordered to your country ſeats, there to ruminate in ſpeechleſs meditation on the wretchedneſs of an enſlaved nation, and the inſignificance of that thing called *a gentleman*, when Freedom and Independence are no more.*

And can any Gentleman dream, that, by withholding himſelf from promoting the Reform of our Repreſentation, he is conſulting the ſafety of a King, and of a Nobility? If thoſe elevated parties ſhall be blind to the chain of cauſe and effect,

* This ſort of baniſhment from Court was common under the French Monarchy. Under the Roman Emperors, a gentleman was frequently ordered to ſome petty iſland in the Mediterranean ſea, to amuſe himſelf with gathering cockle-ſhells and ſea weeds.

you,

you, Gentlemen, who are neither too high nor too low in ſociety for ſalutary reflection, nor too diſſipated for deriving from hiſtory ſolid inſtruction, may perhaps perceive a danger which is hidden from their eyes. If their optics can diſcover nothing to diſquiet them but the troubled *Charybdis* of Popular Diſcontent; cannot you diſcern the *Scylla* of a gathering Uſurpation, deſtined, if not timely cruſhed, to cruſh the throne of the Guelfs, and reduce our loſty Lords, aye, even the Lords of Boroughs themſelves, into dancing puppets at the feet of a deſpotic maſter?

Cæſar himſelf knew not the genius of the government of which he laid the foundations; much leſs was it known to his ſhort-ſighted abettors.—The Roman empire grew out of a gradual and natural progreſſion, from corruption to encroachment; from encroachment to uſurpation; from uſurpation to tyranny; and from tyranny to deſpotiſm: cruſhing, in the end, all thoſe petty lords and tyrants (the Borough-holders of that day) who had aſſiſted in its formation. We, in the ſecond ſtage of the ſame progreſſion, are rapidly advancing to the third.

When an irreſiſtible authority ſhall be ſolidly concentered in a Cabinet; when the regal functions, uſeleſs to a King who cannot exerciſe them in perſon, ſhall be turned againſt him by his treacherous

cherous ſervants; and when the power of the ſword ſhall be paramount to every other power; will not the ſtrife of Britiſh *Triumvirs*, ſupported by their reſpective adherents, and reſpective generals, then begin, unleſs the genius and fortune of *one* ſhall forbid competition? At all events, in ſuch a ſtate of things, muſt not *one* prevail? Will that *one* endure a throne and an enthroned family to ſtand in his way, or to diſappoint his ambition?——— Hiſtory and human nature ſay—No!

Will that *one*, formed by the aſcendency of talents, and a daring courage to overpower and to govern, condeſcend to appear as the mere Miniſter of a royal priſoner; and conſent to diſmiſs the hope which inhabits the boſom of every Deſpot, that of tranſmitting to his own deſcendants the fruit of his crimes?

Surely, Gentlemen, whether we look to *America* for what an injured and irritated Britiſh people did for *the preſervation of liberty*, or to *Rome* for what was done by a demagogue, who *corrupted the government*, and *paſſed the Rubicon in arms*; or to any of thoſe many examples of an overgrown, omnipotent Miniſter, uſurping the throne of his Maſter; we ſhall not be able to diſcover any imaginable ſafety to *Royalty* and *Nobility* amongſt ourſelves, but in a return to the purity of that Conſtitution which

which calls them its own, and offers them the protection of its ſhadowing wings.

In the condition of the King and the Nobility of this country, we all know there is an inherent defect, which nothing but purity in the other branch of the government can in any degree cure. That defect is *inheritance*. No principle can be more ſelf-evident, than that wiſdom, knowledge, and virtue, are *not* hereditary. No propoſition can be more plain, than that a nation which admits of the hereditary principle, in giving it a whole ſenate of legiſlators and judges, and a King alſo, in whom is to reſide a negative on all laws which can be propoſed, as well as the power of adminiſtering the whole executive government, muſt be utterly inſane, if it do not counterbalance ſuch an immenſity of hereditary power by ſome other power, in which wiſdom, knowledge, and virtue ſhall be *inherent* qualities. Such inherent wiſdom, knowledge, and virtue, can only exiſt in a body of men choſen *for* thoſe qualities by their fellow-citizens at large.—— Such inherent wiſdom, knowledge, and virtue, will always be found, when ſuch an aſſembly ſhall conſiſt, like our Houſe of Commons, of a large number; provided no *hereditary* poiſon, or other miſchief, deſtroys election; and provided, alſo, the elective diſtricts be tolerably equal, and ſo limited, that the comparative merits of men in each diſtrict

be generally known, and the freedom of election ſecured by a few ſimple and obvious rules.

But if the *hereditary* branches of our legiſlature are to ſwallow up the *elective*, it muſt generate a deſpotiſm of the worſt kind; that is, a complicated deſpotiſm hid under the forms belonging to free government.

Such a diſordered ſtate of things with us might end in a permanent ſlavery of the people; but in the preſent ſtate of knowledge and habits of thinking, it were more likely to terminate in an exploſion, fatal for ever to all hereditary claims. What Engliſhman, then, who is content with the exiſtence of hereditary powers, ſo they will leave him a free man, and not pull down the Conſtitution; and who ſhudders at the thought of civil war; but muſt anxiouſly watch over the purity of the Repreſentative part of our government! And what Engliſhman, wiſhing to be free, although ever ſo partial to hereditary powers in themſelves, but muſt ſee the wiſdom, and the rectitude, of reſtraining them from ruſhing upon their own deſtruction!

XVII. I truſt, Gentlemen, I give no offence by the earneſtneſs of my expoſtulations. I truſt you will feel with one, who feels for Liberty and and his Country! and who thinks he is diſcharging a ſolemn duty. He gives you the reſult of much meditation:

meditation: he thinks he is right in the judgments he has formed: it is for you to decide on thoſe points. To any who differ from him he is ready to liſten; from any who will honour him with information he is ready to learn. He is of no party but that of truth: he has none to court; none to favour; none to fear!

Let me now return to the two facts concerning the hoſtile attack of certain Peers on the Conſtitution, and that deadly blow which it has received from the collective force of the Borough-holding Faction, and produce you the propoſitions I have to lay before you.

Do not imagine, Gentlemen, I am going to propoſe any ſpecific meaſure to be undertaken by our Repreſentatives. I am not going to do any thing of that nature. I would not willingly ſhock the moſt timid alarmiſt amongſt us. All I aim at, in order that we and our Candidates may come to a right underſtanding, is, that we may jointly make in this meeting ſuch a declaration, touching our Conſtitution, as ſhall ſhew *that we have ſome knowledge of it*, and are not to be cajoled by ſuch men as Mr. *Reeves*; who, while he ſets ſilly and ignorant people calling aloud, and ſubſcribing money, in ſupport of a government of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*—(words which, unexplained, mean juſt nothing at all)—is himſelf circulating hand-bills, and

and writing books, in favour of MONARCHY, which, being interpreted, ſignifies DESPOTISM.

I have only one word more. If the Crown and the Nobility have ever been forward enough to call on us to ſupport *their* part of the Conſtitution, and have ever found us as ready to anſwer as they to call; it will not, methinks, be too much to call, *for once*, upon them to reſtore to us that Houſe of Commons which *they and ſome others have taken from us.**

I will detain you no longer, Gentlemen, from the propoſitions I have to offer. I therefore move, that it be

Reſolved,

I. That the People of England are bound by their Loyalty to ſupport a Government of King, Lords, and Commons.

II. That to the Commons excluſively belong all Right and Power of creating a Commons Houſe of Parliament.

* That the *Crown* is a party in this buſineſs, we may learn from the exiſtence of *Treaſury* Boroughs. We have likewiſe abundant evidence of the fact, in the multitude of Creations, whereby the Crown, *ſince the firſt movements in favour of Parliamentary Reform*, has ſedulouſly fortified the Citadel of Corruption, by raiſing men to the high honours of the Peerage, for no other conceivable merit than that of being Borough holders.

III. That

III. That if a decided Majority of the Seats in the Houſe of Commons ſhould ever become an Inheritance in the poſſeſſion of the Peers, and abſolutely at their diſpoſal, the Conſtitution, notwithſtanding the preſervation of *Forms*, would be ſubverted.

IV. That it is particularly incumbent upon all Repreſentatives of Counties, Cities, and large Towns, to reſiſt all attempts of Peers to obtain and to ſecure to themſelves the Power of appointing Members to ſit in the Houſe of Commons; as well as to prevent that Repreſentation, which ought to be enjoyed by the "whole body of the People," from falling into the hands of ſo few perſons, even Commoners, as to endanger the Independence of that Houſe.

Offering to you theſe propoſitions, for adoption, I certainly do not mean, Gentlemen, to diſguiſe my hope that they may, in due time, lead to ſome active good, by operating as an incitement to men of weight and conſideration, who are eſteemed and beloved amongſt us, but whoſe virtues and love of retirement beget in them, perhaps, too much diffidence to turn the penetration and energy of their well-ſtored minds to the great theme which it has fallen to my lot to diſcuſs, but which they are ſo much more able than myſelf to place in its true light. Let us hope that ſuch men will not, in their happy and virtuous retirement, overlook this great moral and political truth—that our country has

now

now need of their active ſervices, to ſnatch it from the gulph of its own corruptions.

Now that the county of Lincoln begins to feel its conſequence, and to *act*, we muſt all of us wiſh it to *think*; ſo that it may act only to its own honour, and the good of our country. In what I have offered to you, I have for the preſent contributed my mite—my humble contribution of *thought:* and when I look round and ſee ſo much ability, and knowledge, and public ſpirit, not only preſent at this meeting, but ſcattered over the whole county, we may hope that, in the perilous ſituation of our country, this county will contribute its full proportion to that *Voice of the People*, to which a prudent legiſlature will ever pay the utmoſt deference.

APPENDIX I. *See p.* 21.

EXTRACT FROM MURPHY'S TACITUS. VOL. II. P. 275.

" BUT neither theſe religious ceremonies, nor " the liberal donations of the prince, could efface " from the minds of men the prevailing opinion— " that Rome was ſet on fire by his own orders. " The infamy of that horrible tranſaction ſtill ad- " hered to him. In order, if poſſible, to remove " the imputation, he determined *to tranſfer the* " *guilt*

" *guilt to others.* For this purpoſe he puniſhed,
" with exquiſite torture, a race of men *deteſted for*
" *their evil practices*; by vulgar appellation called
" *Chriſtians.*

" The name was derived from *Chriſt*, who, in
" the reign of Tiberius, ſuffered under *Pontius*
" *Pilate*, the Procurator of *Judæa.* By that event
" the ſect, of which he was the founder, received
" a blow, which, for a time, checked the growth
" of *a dangerous ſuperſtition:* but it *revived* ſoon
" after, and ſpread with recruited vigour, not only
" in *Judæa*, (the ſoil that gave it birth) but *even*
" *in the city of Rome*, the common ſink into which
" every thing *infamous and abominable* flows like a
" torrent from all quarters of the world. *Nero*
" proceeded with his uſual artifice. He found *a*
" *ſet of profligate and abandoned wretches, who were*
" *induced to confeſs themſelves guilty*; and, on the
" evidence of ſuch men, a number of *Chriſtians*
" were convicted; not, indeed, upon clear evi-
" dence of their having ſet the city on fire, but ra-
" ther on account of *their ſullen hatred of the whole*
" *human race.* They were put to death with ex-
" quiſite cruelty, and to their ſufferings *Nero* add-
" ed mockery and deriſion. Some were covered
" with the ſkins of wild beaſts, and left to be de-
" voured by dogs; others were nailed to the croſs;
" numbers were burnt alive; and many, covered
" over with inflammable matter, were lighted up,

" when

" when the day declined, to ſerve as torches during " the night.

" For the convenience of ſeeing this tragic ſpec- " tacle the Emperor lent his own gardens. He " added the ſports of the Circus, and aſſiſted in " perſon, ſometimes driving a curricle, and occa- " ſionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's " dreſs. At length the cruelty of theſe proceedings " filled every breaſt with compaſſion. Humanity " relented in favour of the Chriſtians. *The man-* " *ners of that people were, no doubt, of a pernicious* " *tendency*, and *their crimes called for the hand of* " *juſtice:* but it was evident that they fell a ſacrifice, " not for the public good, but to glut the rage " and cruelty of one man only."

Who can peruſe this ſingular paſſage without ſeeing three ſtriking ſimilitudes; firſt, between the conduct of *Nero*, and that of Mr. *Pitt* and his *Borough-holding Faction*. Secondly, between the caſe of the *Chriſtians* perſecuted by that Emperor, and that of the Reforming Societies perſecuted by that *Miniſter*. And, thirdly, between the aſtoniſh- ing prejudices of ſuch a man as *Tacitus*, and the prejudices, no leſs aſtoniſhing, of many *Engliſh Gentlemen* of theſe times.

The Emperor, conſcious of having himſelf ſet fire to the city of *Rome*, " paid a ſet of profligate

" and

" and abandoned wretches" to accuſe the innocent *Chriſtians* of that deed. The *Miniſter* and his Faction alſo, conſcious of their own *treaſons* againſt the Conſtitution, " found a ſet of profligate and " abandoned men" to perform the ſame convenient office for them: and here they refine upon *Nero*; for they ſtrive to faſten the guilt of treaſon upon the very men who were bringing *the iniquity to light*. *Tacitus*, a brilliant ſcholar, the moſt penetrating genius of antiquity, and the friend of liberty, wholly neglecting that inveſtigation of the tenets of the perſecuted, which from him, of all men, might have been expected before he gave an opinion—even *Tacitus*, bigotted *to a corrupt ſyſtem*, which theſe men were reforming, becomes the dupe of prejudices the moſt vulgar, and diſgraces both his heart and underſtanding by vilifying their characters, their principles, and their conduct.

Engliſh Gentlemen, neglecting to inveſtigate the actual ſtate of Repreſentation, and to inform themſelves on the ſubject of Reform, too readily yielded to the artful and inſidious accuſations againſt the Reformers, and too eaſily imbibed prejudices to the diſadvantage of them and their cauſe.

That ſuch a man as *Tacitus* ſhould have expoſed himſelf to the juſt cenſure of all poſterity, for having ignorantly and unjuſtly ſtigmatiſed the friends of religious truth and moral reformation, as men harbour-

harbouring " *a dangerous ſuperſtition*;" as " *a race* " *of men deteſted for their evil practices*;" as men whoſe very *manners* were of " *a pernicious tenden-* " *cy*;" as men bearing a " *ſullen hatred to the* " *whole human race*;" and as men whoſe principles were " *infamous and abominable*;" and whoſe " CRIMES CALLED FOR THE HAND OF JUSTICE," is truly aſtoniſhing!

What a leſſon is here againſt *Prejudice!* It ſhould particularly caution Engliſhmen not blindly to aid the modern *Nero* againſt the friends of Parliamentary Reform, who have been firſt betrayed and deſerted by him, and then ſelected as the objects of his peculiarly wicked perſecution! And let thoſe who, *without examination of the doctrines of political ſalvation which theſe men preach*, are the forwardeſt to condemn, and the bittereſt in their calumnies—let thoſe men, I ſay, read this extraordinary paſſage, and then bluſh for *Tacitus* and themſelves.

But how can we forbear to carry our parallel a little farther? May we not add, that although *legiſlative Repreſentation* (which is *political Chriſtianity*, or " good tidings, of great joy, which " ſhall be to all people,") received from the modern " Pontius Pilates a blow, which, for a time, " checked the growth of [this] dangerous ſuperſti- " tion,"

" tion," (as our modern *Scribes** affect to conſider it) " it revived ſoon after, and ſpread with recruit-" ed vigour," even in the city of *Weſtminſter*.—Nor, when we conſider the political ſalvation contained in this doctrine, ſhall, I truſt, this ſpread, and this vigour abate, until " all men be ſaved, " and come to the knowledge of the Truth !"

The legiſlative Repreſentation of Great Britain, to this day, has ſhared the ſame fate as the Chriſtianity of Great Britain ſhared during the dark ages of Monkiſh ignorance. Its root, indeed, has been preſerved, and has ſtruck too deep, I truſt, ever to be removed: but, for want of care and culture, the tree has been ſtunted, and its ſcanty fruit has periſhed unripened. A Reformation will ſecure its abundance and perfection. In Ireland the doctrine, though known, is even more corrupted than here. America has received it in great purity. It has baniſhed deſpotiſm from France, and a complicated Ariſtocratic tyranny from Holland. Brabant and Flanders are about to

* By conſulting a learned writer, I find that the Scripture word *Scribes* is applied to a great variety of perſons, ſuch as *Judges*, *Interpreters*, and *Preachers of the Law*; *Commiſſaries*, *Muſter-maſters of an army*, *Secretaries of State*, *Officers of State*, &c. He then adds, " and becauſe they, the leaſt of all men, could bear a Reformation, " we find them taking all occaſions to oppoſe the preaching and " ſpreading of the Goſpel." *Cruden.*

receive it; and it ſeems making its way even towards *Rome*, the fountain-head of impoſture.

Like the proper Chriſtianity it has nothing to fear, but from its own corruptions.

APPENDIX II. *See p.* 28.

THE following is a Liſt of the Committee of Secrecy, according to the Morning Chronicle of the 16th of May, 1794; with ſuch further information concerning the Members thereof as I have been able to collect from the *Red Book*, and from *The State of the Repreſentation of England and Wales*, publiſhed by the Society of the Friends of the People.

In the latter there is a diſtinction between Members of the Houſe of Commons *nominated* by the Patron of the Borough, and ſuch as are returned under a preponderating and deciſive *influence*. I have therefore marked the caſes reſpectively by an N or an I.

Members

Members of the Committee.	*Description.*	*Whom they represent.*	*By what Place returned.*
1. Mr. Pitt	Prime Minister		Cambridge Univ.
2. Mr. Dundas	A Minister in various departments		Edinburgh*.
3. Mr. R. Dundas	Lord Advocate of Scotland		Edinburghshire †.
4. Sir J. Scott	Attorney General	Marquis of Bath	Weobley, N.
5. Sir J. Mitford	Solicitor General	Lord Beverly	Beeralstone, N.
6. Sir P. Arden	Mast. of the Rolls	Mr. Milward	Hastings, N.
7. Mr. Steel	Paymas. of Forces and Ind. Commissioner	Duke Richmond	Chichester, I.
8. Mr. Jenkinson	Ind. Commissioner, and son of Lord Hawksbury	Mr. Lamb	Rye, N.
9. Lord Mornington	Ind. Commissioner, and Lord of the Treasury	The Treasury	Windsor, I.
10. Mr. Wyndham	Secretary at War	——	Norwich
11. Mr. Burke	"An old Man, with a very young Pension"‡	Earl Fitzwilliam	Malton, N.
12. Mr. Grenville	Brother to Lord Grenville	Mr. Crespigny	Aldbro', Suff. N.
13. Lord Ossory	Made a Peer 9th Aug. following	——	Bedfordshire.
14. Ld. Mulgrave	A General	Himself	Scarborough, I.
15. Mr. Ellis	Made a Peer 13th Aug. following	Duke Marlbro', *or* Mr Ashe A'Court	Heytesbury, N.
16. Mr. Anstruther	Solicitor General to the Prince of Wales, a Welch Judge, & standing Counsel to the Ind. Board	Earl of Lonsdale	Cockermouth, N.
17. Mr. Townshend	A Privy Counsellor, and son to Marq. Townshend.	——	Yarmouth.
18. Mr. Browne	Independent Gentlemen	——	Bridgnorth.
19. Sir H. Houghton			Preston.
20. Mr. Stanley			Lancashire.
21. Mr. Powis			Northamptonshi.

Such was the *Jury of Accusation* in the cause of the Borough-holders, *versus* the Reformers.

* 36 Electors.
† 96 ditto.
‡ His own Description of himself. See his Letter to a Noble Lord, page 39.

THE following Letter, which makes the ſecond part of this little work, was publiſhed in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* on the 10th and 17th of September. On the day of its date it was firſt ſent to another provincial paper, the editors of which civilly excuſed themſelves for rejecting it, on the plea of its being "abundantly too long." Poſſibly thoſe editors might miſtake alike their own deciding motive, and the author's view in writing. His decided condemnation of Miniſters might not meet with their approbation; but he can with truth aſſert, that ſuch condemnation was not cauſed by Miniſters holding offices, to which, if vacated, oppoſition would probably ſucceed.

The writer condemns the preſent Miniſters, becauſe he thinks, that, in conſequence of the vaſt improvements in that ſyſtem of ſtate craft, which ſucceeded to arbitrary prerogative, and which has at length transferred the actual power of the State from King, Lords, and Commons, to an odious Faction, thoſe Miniſters have been the inſtruments of doing more towards ſubverting the Engliſh Conſtitution, and debaſing the minds of the people, than any other Miniſters ſince the revolution. Nay, the various evidences of their perfidy to the moſt fundamental of our conſtitutional principles, and

of

of their atrocious hoſtility to the liberties of mankind, are ſufficient to fix it as his deliberate judgment, that, in order to gratify their own inordinate luſt of power, had they the means, they would not ſcruple to enſlave the whole human race.

Declamation, it is true, ought to go for nothing; but *definitions* and *facts* will eſtabliſh PROOFS, which neither *votes* nor *majorities* can ever ſhake. Not, for the preſent, to touch on the origin or the objects of the preſent war; nor to meddle with the queſtions attended with difficulties, or ſuſceptible of doubt; let the reader, in the firſt place, either take from approved authorities, or frame himſelf, an accurate *definition* of political liberty; and, in the next place, let him conſult *facts* reſpecting the paramount dominion now centering in that Faction, who have ſecured to themſelves and their heirs the abſolute power of appointing a decided majority of the Houſe of Commons; and, having ſo done, and duly reflected on the underſtanding which muſt neceſſarily ſubſiſt between that Faction and thoſe who are the nominal Miniſters of the Crown; then let him decide on the merit of Miniſters, and on the condition of his country.

Prior to the Letter which occupies the following pages being compoſed, the writer tranſmitted to the provincial paper, by which this letter was afterwards rejected, Mr. Young's Letter to the Yeo-

manry, and the editors publiſhed it at full length on Friday, the 12th of Auguſt. As that letter may be found in the Annals of Agriculture, No. 151, it is unneceſſary to inſert it here.

To the EDITOR *of the Cambridge Intelligencer.*

SIR, *Aug.* 16, 1796.

ALTHOUGH Mr. YOUNG, in his late letter, has placed the *neceſſity* of the nation's arming in a ſtrong point of view; more may be yet ſaid on that part of the ſubject: and right as that Gentleman is, in reſpect to the *end*, he is certainly erroneous and deficient in his *means*. Having been one of the moſt active, and the moſt vehement, to plunge this country into a war with *France*, and to buoy up the public with an expectation of overturning the new republic, it certainly is incumbent on him, now that Great Britain muſt look to her own exiſtence, to give his country the beſt advice in his power. But thoſe who have been conſpicuouſly inſtrumental in bringing us into our preſent ſituation, are not the men, whether we conſider their principles or their judgment, in whom we ſhall be inclined to place much confidence, as the beſt guides for conducting us into a ſituation of ſafety.

Reviewing the political conduct of Mr. *Young* for the laſt three years or more, we muſt ſtill conſider him as ſpeaking the ſentiments of Miniſters. Theſe men having found his dangerous talents of great uſe to them in the fatal work of deluſion, ſeem again to hope thoſe talents may prove equally ſucceſsful in the office of perſuaſion now allotted him. But when we ſee ſuch means employed by Miniſters, for ſuch an end, we muſt not be ſurpriſed, to ſee the nation brought to the brink of ruin by their wretched counſels. The nation, it ſeems, is to be armed and rouſed to its utmoſt military capacity; and Parliament remains unaſſembled, while Mr. *Young* is employed to write a letter to the Yeomanry of England, recommending voluntary enrolments in military corps! But the ſelfiſh ambition of Miniſters cleaves to them ſo cloſely, and their enmity to the principles of free government is ſo deeply rooted in their hearts, that not even the laſt extremity of danger to the ſtate can prevail on them voluntarily to reſort to the *Conſtitution* for repairing the miſchief they have done, and averting even the final overthrow of the empire.

As a right ſyſtem of arming is not the peculiar buſineſs of a War Miniſter, or of any Miniſter, but is in itſelf an eſſential and moſt important part of our Conſtitution, although unhappily for the people, it is a part, of which they have long been

defrauded; it will be neceſſary to take a comprehenſive view of the ſubject, or it cannot be underſtood.

If Miniſters either knew or reſpected the Conſtitution, we might hope that, at a moment of ſuch extremity as the preſent, they would fly to it for ſuccour:—but they know it not; and it knows not them, nor their deeds. Miniſters of all parties have too long governed the country by ſtanding armies, and ſtanding majorities, as the neceſſary parts of a ſyſtem hoſtile to freedom. The preſent Miniſters have puſhed that ſyſtem beyond their predeceſſors; and, had they ſucceeded in reſtoring "*the old government of France, with terrors in its* "*train,*" which Mr. *Young* has avowed to have been one of their objects, what had the liberties of England to expect at their hands, but the ſame fate as thoſe of *France!* Good God! that men ſhould be the Miniſters of a country claiming freedom, who have avowed the infernal wiſh of rivetting on twenty-five millions of their fellow-creatures an odious deſpotiſm; at the contemplation of which every virtuous heart muſt recoil, and every virtuous mind muſt ſicken!

Such Miniſters muſt be full as reluctant to call forth the true military force of the nation, as they are to conduct its civil affairs without corruption; ſince either one or the other muſt put an end to their

their power. In the conſtitutional maxim, that every man, without exception, is liable to *taxation*, they are not in need of any inſtructors: but having brought their country into its preſent unparalleled danger, they ought to know, that every *able man*, without exception, is liable to perſonal ſervice; and that *it is their duty* to call forth this national force in all its antient energy.

Of the *Poſſe Comitatus*, although we have not indeed altogether loſt the name, nor the legal idea from our books, we have, alas! loſt all popular practice and knowledge. In general, we have ſome glimmering notion of obſolete law, by which every Engliſhman was bound to obey the call of the magiſtrate, and perſonally to aid in preſerving the peace, by *force of arms*. But the popular knowledge of this important duty is obliterated; and, inſtead of a *poſſe comitatus* of free citizens, always at hand, on the very appearance of agitation, to *prevent* miſchief, the magiſtrate, to the country's diſgrace, is now obliged to look on, while houſes are burned and pillaged, and innocent people murdered, waiting the arrival from ſome diſtant barrack of a detachment from the *ſtanding army*.

But, Sir, the *poſſe comitatus* was not adapted only to the certain maintenance of internal peace and ſecurity, but it was equally a defence againſt

external

external enemies. It conſiſted of the whole people always armed, trained to arms, duly organized and marſhalled, and at all times in readineſs, on a ſignal, to fly to the defence of the coaſt againſt invaders. Such a ſyſtem of national defence was too congenial with a ſpirit of freedom not to be ſubverted, if the craft of courtly ſtateſmen could contrive the means: unhappily, thoſe means were found in mere neglect. Mankind, naturally prone to a relaxation from all the ſeverer duties, were but too much inclined to *wait* for the call of the magiſtrate to ſet about the performance of their military duty, light as it was, to attend a muſter of arms:—that call growing leſs and leſs frequent, and at length ceaſing altogether, the *poſſe comitatus* died; but its body is ſtill in the people, and its ſoul, which hath not ſeen corruption, in the ſtatute book. It ſhall riſe again, I truſt, and become the ſaviour of our country.

Under what ſyſtem can there be ſuch military energy as under that of the *poſſe comitatus*; or, as it may be truly called, a *natural militia*, whereby the whole phyſical ſtrength of a nation is brought into exertion! It is this very ſyſtem which has enabled a new-born republic to cut to pieces the German veterans, and to drive before it the ſtanding armies of combined Europe. To this ſyſtem, the true ſyſtem of our own Conſtitution, we ourſelves muſt return, or Britain muſt inevitably bend her

her neck to the yoke of *France*. The gigantic power of that country in its diſtreſs, ſo infinitely ſurpaſſing any thing to which *monarchy*, in the period of its higheſt proſperity, could ever raiſe it, may aſtoniſh thoſe who are unacquainted with political ſcience: but it was foreſeen, and expreſsly intimated one hundred and forty years ago, by *Harrington*, when he recommended to *Cromwell* a ſimilar ſyſtem of government. He then foretold that *France* would become republican; and that when this happened, ſhe would "certainly govern "the world," as *Rome*, by the ſame means, had done. And ſuppoſing *England* not to take his advice, and conſequently not to reſtore the antient militia, he adds, "and as you were in that, ſo ſhall "you in like caſe be reduced to a province."* The deep ſagacity of this wiſe man may well entitle his opinions to ſome reſpect.

But how can Mr. *Young* be expected to recommend to us a return to our antient ſyſtem of arming, when the ſame ſyſtem in *France* has been the object of his pointed ridicule, and the butt of his ignorant ſatire; as proving the people were reduced to ſlavery, becauſe called to the armies by *requiſition*. Are not our own militia, at this day, drawn by requiſition? And how elſe are we to call out a force equal to our defence againſt the legions of

* P. 203. Ed. 1747.

ſoldiers

ſoldiers that will be brought againſt us, as ſoon as the Emperor ſhall have laid down his arms?

Mr. *Young* has another ſtrong objection to our conſtitutional ſyſtem of military defence. It is inſeparably united with our ſyſtem of political defence, by a ſubſtantial Repreſentation in uncorrupt Parliaments; and we all know how his miſchievous eloquence has been exerted in ſupport of the preſent corruptions. The recovery of a military ſyſtem, which, *without expence* and *patronage*, holds in perpetual readineſs the whole phyſical ſtrength of a nation, and which, by the *cheap* mode of requiſition, calls into activity, on every emergency, juſt that proportion which may be wanted, is not a ſyſtem that will ever be reliſhed by Miniſters whoſe principle of government is corruption, and whoſe object is power without reſponſibility, or, in other words, arbitrary power. No: when they called on the public laſt year, by a parliamentary *requiſition* of their own invention, for about thirty thouſand men to augment the navy, it did not coſt the people, in mere *bounty-money*, leſs than a *million ſterling*; unleſs in othe parts of *England* men were procured on eaſier terms than in this county. Here that expence was from thirty to forty pounds a man. And, with reſpect to the army, what muſt be the expence of *bounty-money*, when a ſingle recruiting officer in this county is generally underſtood to have made thirty thouſand pounds in this

war, by his contracts with Government for raiſing men!

Much as our true antient militia, planned by the god-like *Alfred*, has fallen into oblivion, its principles may be clearly ſeen in a ſtatute of ſo late a date as the 33d of *Henry* VIII. c. 9. Inſtead of the modern muſquet and bayonet, the weapons then generally in uſe were bows and arrows; and our Engliſh archers were particularly ſkilful. Every man was to be armed, and that at his own expence. —Every *ſervant* in a family "paſſing the age of "ſeventeen years and under the age of ſixty, and "taking wages, was to be trained to the bow."— If they had neglected to bring with them bows and arrows of their own, their maſters, ſays the ſtatute, ſhall provide them, and "abate the money that "they ſhall pay for the ſame bows and arrows out "of their wages." Nor was this all: for, as perfection in archery depended on early uſe, every "man child, being of the age of ſeven years and "above, was alſo to be provided with a bow and "two ſhafts, to induce, and learn them, and bring "them up in ſhooting." And not only was this general proviſion for arming made by the ſtatute, but all parties were puniſhable, by *fine*, for neglecting to practice, ſo as to attain the neceſſary ſkill for war.

That

That the whole phyſical ſtrength of the nation was intended to be thus in a ſtate of preparation for ſervice, is ſeen in the preamble; where it is recited, that "Archery and ſhooting in long bows "was little uſed, but daily did diminiſh, decay, "and abate more and more; for that much part "of the *commonalty* and *poor people* of the realm, "whereby of *old time* the great number and ſub-"ſtance of archers hath grown and multiplied, "were not of power and ability to *buy* long bows "of yew,* to exerciſe ſhooting in the ſame, and "to ſuſtain the continual charge thereof."

It was into this ſyſtem, Sir, of our ancient Saxon militia, and not into the regions of fancy, that Mr. *Burke* ſhould have looked for "*the cheap de-*"*fence of nations.*" This true military principle of our own Conſtitution, is, and ever has been, the military principle of every *truly* FREE government; nor can any one long ſtand without it. Such was the military ſyſtem of *Greece*, when ſhe ſubdued *Aſia* from the *Helleſpont* to the *Indus:* ſuch was the ſyſtem of ancient *Rome*, when all nations ſubmitted to her power: ſuch was the ſyſtem of *Iſrael*, which, while uncorrupted, made that ſmall commonwealth ſo terrible in war to the deſpotic nations around:

* In order that the people might have cheap bows, for common practice, every bow-maker was to make four times as many of elm, aſh, &c. as he made of yew.

and

and ſuch alſo has been the ſyſtem of *America* ever ſince the revolution which eſtabliſhed her independency. "The poſſeſſion of arms," ſays *Fletcher of Saltown*, "is the diſtinction between a free man "and a ſlave!"

Mr. *Young* may indulge himſelf in puerile invectives againſt "the new Goths and Vandals;" but he had better excite his countrymen rather to excel their enemies in the ſciences, particularly in thoſe of war and government, than to treat them with contempt and railing. The ſame Gentleman has told us much about the *ſlavery* introduced into *France* by the revolution: but he who ſeriouſly talks of an *armed nation* being ſlaves, muſt be in a delirium; and he who tells us of the *arbitrary power* of the *elected* rulers of ſuch a people, cannot be in a very ſober ſtate of mind.

It has ever been held found policy to increaſe our navy, great as is the expence, in proportion to the increaſed naval ſtrength of rival nations. A ſimilar policy has, from ſmall beginnings, gradually augmented all the ſtanding armies of Europe, until they have reached their preſent burthenſome magnitude, and become the inſtruments of a wide extended deſpotiſm. *France* at length has broken theſe bonds; a new æra is arrived, and henceforth a new ſpecies of rivalſhip muſt take place. The European nations muſt haſten to become republicans,

cans, or they muſt receive the law from that power which has as many ſoldiers as men; and which ſends againſt mean mercenaries and debaſed ſubjects, high-minded citizens, who feel it to be their prerogative to conquer ſlaves. The deſpotic governments have received a chaſtiſement for attempting to ſtrangle in the cradle the new-born liberties of *France*, which they will not ſoon forget. But what cannot be effected by force, will doubtleſs be attempted by fraud; and no long-continued peace can become general, until the ſeveral governments of Europe ſhall be ſomewhat aſſimilated to each other under forms of freedom. Nay, according to *Harrington*, the freedom which he foreſaw in *France* cannot be ſafe, but by being communicated to the ſtates around. "If *France*, *Italy*, and "*Spain*," ſays he, "were not all ſick, all corrupted together, there *would be none of them ſo*;—for "the ſick *would not be able to withſtand the ſound*, "nor the ſound to preſerve their health without "curing of the ſick." The profundity of this obſervation begins to manifeſt itſelf; and our daily experience now ſhews that it was founded in nature.

It is, at this criſis, the happy fortune of *England*, that her Conſtitution, rightly underſtood, is truly republican. He who ſhall deny this will have to maintain, that the *objects* of that Conſtitution are *not* to uphold a *public* intereſt, nor the *rights* and *liberties* of the people. But the *public* intereſt, and the

the *rights* and *liberties* of the people, being the direct *objects* of the Engliſh Conſtitution, the true denomination of our government is that of a commonwealth. It is the *end* of a government, and not the *means* it employs to that end, by which its character is determined, and from which its *denomination* is rightly taken. If it be the *end* of the Engliſh Conſtitution to make the King ſole legiſlator, and abſolute, then is our government a Monarchy, and our country a Kingdom; but if *royalty* as well as nobility are only *means* towards upholding the *public* intereſt, and the *rights* and *liberties* of the nation, our government is Republican, and our country a Commonwealth.

This language may bring obloquy on myſelf, and ſhock the prejudices of others; but he who at this portentous moment is deterred, through fear of encountering the one or of ſuffering the other, from doing his duty as a citizen, and promoting juſt notions of our government, muſt not feel much for his country. If nothing ſhort of republican energies can now ſave the ſtate, is it not the higheſt good fortune, that, while other nations muſt attain them through public convulſions and revolutions of government, we have already the forms and principles of a republic, and may ſecure its energies by the mere reform of corruptions, and the mere revival of our ancient laws and uſages!— Is it not a ſingular felicity, that, by merely attend-

ing to the true meaning of words, we may diſcover that all the jealouſies between honeſt Democrats, honeſt Ariſtocrats, and honeſt Royaliſts, ariſe from the inaccuracy of popular language, *artfully played upon by deſigning men*; and that, by merely acting up to the principles of our own Conſtitution with fidelity and honour, we ſhall find ourſelves in poſſeſſion of a *royal, noble,* and *popular* Republic, truly embracing the *public* intereſt in *all its orders*;—of a genuine Commonwealth, in which the *common weal* is the end and object! If then no Engliſhman can be true to the Conſtitution, or to his Prince, nor in any ſenſe *loyal,* without being a republican; and if neither a nobleman, nor the King himſelf, can be faithful to his truſt without being a republican alſo; what muſt have been the views of Miniſters, when, by means of fraudful alarms and deluſions, they ſet on foot, through the agency of Mr. *Reeves,* (the literary champion of *Monarchy*) their inſidious aſſociations againſt republicans!

In an age of frivolous diſſipation there may be ſomething ſevere and formidable in the idea of arming the nation on the ancient Saxon principle: but modern *America* is ſo armed; and ſuch a ſyſtem may even admit, on proper communications, of reaſonable exemptions to the effeminate. Some may ſtartle at the idea of putting arms into the hands of the *poor*; but let the objectors tell us, *of whom elſe but the pooreſt and moſt diſſolute of the commu-*

community is our immenſe ſtanding army now almoſt excluſively compoſed? A true popular militia of a free nation never did turn its arms againſt its country; but ſtanding armies have done it often. If the people are to arm, as in ancient times, at their own expence, that circumſtance, I ſhould fear, muſt inevitably exclude far too many of the poor; for a muſquet and a bayonet, with their appendages, muſt now coſt more in proportion than a ſtaff of yew and a few aſpin arrows did formerly. But this inconvenience might be remedied by ſuch of the poor as were moſt truſt-worthy being armed by their maſters and landlords.

If the luxurious and lukewarm are averſe from arming at all, how will they like to have a French ſoldiery quartered on them? If the people in general ſhall ſtartle at the magnitude of ſuch a conſtitutional operation, are we prepared to behold four or five hundred thouſand of the enemy in poſſeſſion of our country? In *Brabant and Holland* the French *conciliate*, becauſe thoſe countries are intended to be parts of their republic. In *Italy* they content themſelves with contributions, and putting a temporary ring in the noſe of the conquered; as there they find no rival to their greatneſs, and as from thence they have received no peculiar exaſperation; but *England* is the object of their reſerved vengeance—the *Carthage* they mean to deſtroy.

What our real ſituation and danger is we ſhall not learn from Miniſters, nor their minions. *England* having been the grand actuating member of a confederacy againſt *France*——a confederacy which without our money never could have aſſumed a formidable appearance, nor have inflicted on that nation any material wound——has attempted to cruſh the new-born liberty of millions, to diſmember their country, and to divide it as a prey and a ſpoil with the plunderers of *Poland*. Can this be forgotten? While Miniſters put their truſt in the legions of mercenaries led forth in this deteſted cauſe, and madly hoped to re-plunge into the abyſs of ſlavery a vaſt and a gallant nation, in the moment of its exultation on riſing to the dignity of freedom; theſe beſotted men, theſe drunkards, as intemperate in their counſels as at their tables, were not content with the ordinary cauſes of irritation, which policy has introduced into national warfare, and which on the day of reconciliation leaves no ſting behind; but our language was ranſacked for terms of reproach and inſult, and for accuſations againſt every ruler in *France*, which it is ſcarcely in nature to forgive. Are we then to expect peace juſt when ſuch Miniſters ſhall be compelled to aſk it at the hands of men whom they have ſo vilified? —Rather let us expect the collected vengeance of that republic, which has been conſolidated by the very preſſure of the vaſt force which, for a ſeaſon, bore on all ſides ſo hard upon it.

Already

Already has *France* found the fulneſs of republican ſtrength; already has ſhe broken and diſperſed the confederacy; already has ſhe brought to her feet every enemy, except ourſelves. The inſular ſituation of our country, and the greatneſs and excellence of our navy, have hitherto preſerved us from her vengeance; but the day approaches, when, if I miſtake not, we muſt repel from our own ſhores, by our *internal* ſtrength, her conquering atmies, or periſh as a nation. *An armed nation is not to be repelled but by an armed nation.* No reflecting man, ſurely, will dream that all the mercenaries, and all the patriotic corps we can poſſibly muſter, will be a match for that force, which has already cruſhed under its weight the combined armies of *England*, *Germany*, *Italy*, and *Spain!*—— While *France* has it now in her power to gratify the ambition and pride of *Spain*, by making her a gift of *Portugal*, muſt we not expect very ſhortly to ſee the navies of *France*, *Spain*, and *Holland* united?*

* The gift here ſuppoſed would alſo add to this confederacy the marine of *Portugal*; nor, according to the preſent views, the vaſt deſigns, and the deep counſels of *France*, would it be ſurpriſing if the fleets of *Venice* and *Naples* alſo ſhould make part of their force in another year. But *Sweden* cannot ſpare her navy to her republican ally, ſo long as the marine of *Ruſſia* requires to be watched: and as the maritime views and the rigid virtue of *Catharine* can neither incline her, as we muſt preſume, to depreſs the naval power of this country, nor permit her to deſert and take advantage of us in the hour of diſtreſs, ſo *perhaps* we have no apprehenſions to entertain of ſeeing the Ruſſian and Swediſh fleets arranged on the ſide of our enemies.

The navy of *England* ſimply in its military capacity may ſtill, I grant, be ſuperior; but, divided as muſt be its ſtrength, to cover our tranſmarine dominions, and to protect our commerce in every ſea, it cannot be ſufficient to prevent invaſion at home.

It is but ſeventeen years ago ſince the combined fleets of *France* and *Spain* alone cruized triumphantly in our Channel; the *Britiſh* ſeeking ſhelter in Spithead, and leaving them maſters on our coaſt. That was under the *Monarchy*. Such an opportunity under the *Republic* would have given us cauſe to remember our want of *internal defence*. Ten days before that event, I witneſſed the idea of invaſion being treated with deriſion by a naval officer of high rank and great eſtimation; but when intelligence reached *Portſmouth* of the retreat of the Britiſh up the Channel, the language of preſumption had left behind it no reſources for the iſland's protection, which a chagrined countenance then proclaimed to be open to the enemy.

"Well informed and able heads," ſays Mr. Young, "ſpeak of difficulties and dangers innu-

enemies. It may be prudent, however, firſt of all, to make ſure of *the fulneſs of our own internal ſtrength*; if it be only as the beſt means for ſecuring to us the fidelity of the crowned heads, and regular governments, with whom we are in alliance.

"merable

" merable in the way of ſuch an expedition."—But what was the declaration of the illuſtrious *Chatham*, after he had ſucceſsfully invaded *France* with about eight thouſand men? " I conferred," ſaid he, " with the moſt experienced commanders by " ſea and land; but they pointed out *difficulties and* " *dangers innumerable:*—I conſulted HOWE; and " by his compaſs I ſteered." When *Carnot* ſhall ſay to ſuch men as *Kleber* and *Jourdan*, *Moreau* and *Pichegru*, *Angereau* and *Buonaparte*, " I have ſta- " tioned oppoſite the coaſts of *England* FORTY DIS- " TINCT ARMIES, OF TWENTY THOUSAND MEN " EACH; veſſels of all ſorts are prepared to tranſ- " port them; and the united navies of *France*, " *Spain*, and *Holland* are ready to co-operate;"—will ſuch ſoldiers talk to ſuch a ſtateſman of " diffi- " culties and dangers innumerable." Go to! If you ſeek deſtruction, take the path of unreflecting confidence! For confidence in Miniſters, and in corrupt majorities, this nation has already paid ſufficiently dear. Let it not add to its infatuation, confidence in a navy, for what a navy is utterly incompetent to perform!

It is not the buſineſs of invaders to meet a navy at ſea, but to elude its vigilance, and puſh for the land. View the vaſt circuit of the hoſtile coaſt from the *Texel* to the bay of *Biſcay*, and abounding with harbours, and it will be ſeen that no wind can blow but what may waft hither an invaſion. Nor

are there leſs than *eight points of the compaſs*, in any one of which, if the wind ſhould ſpring up, *Carnot*'s *forty armies* might put to ſea at once from forty different ſtations; baffling, by the immenſity of the operation, all the efforts of an oppoſing navy; and ſetting at defiance every ſpecies of reſiſtance, except that alone which a free and armed nation can preſent. Preparatory to invaſion, the combined fleet ſeeks the Britiſh; leads it into the ocean; manœuvres away time; and, finally, ſuſtains an obſtinate engagement; crippling at leaſt, if not defeating, that navy, which cannot be repaired before the fate of *England* may be decided.

If, then, we mean to defend our country againſt ſuch a gigantic and truly military power as that of *France*, the true queſtion is, wherever an army lands, can we inſtantly pour down on the invaders with ſuperior numbers, and preſs forward with freſh columns as the firſt grow weary; inceſſantly compelling the enemy to fight by day and watch by night, until worn out by loſs of numbers and want of reſt? And can this be done on as may different points of the coaſt at once as ſuch an enemy may attempt! When *forty victorious armies* may be deſtined to attack in concert our whole line of coaſt from Cornwall to Northumberland, the ancient defenſive ſyſtem of retreat and protracted war would be our ruin. As *France* was defended againſt the Germans, *England* muſt be defended againſt the French.

French. If we will not prepare men and arms for ſuch a reſiſtance, we ought to prepare our necks for the Yoke, and our eyes for beholding the Britiſh empire in a ſingle campaign crumbled to rubbiſh!

And even with ſuch proſpects before us, and when not a moment ought to be loſt in preparing for defence, Miniſters, inſtead of reſorting to the *Conſtitution* for calling forth the energies of the nation, are ſending Mr. *Hammond*, forſooth, to the continent on ſome wretched negociation; and employing Mr. *Young* to write a perſuaſive to the *Yeomanry* to enrol themſelves in "*patriotic corps.*"

But do theſe men, whoſe daily work it is to adminiſter to public ſpirit the deadly poiſon of Borough corruption, and whoſe labour it has been to hunt all patriotiſm out of the land—do theſe men now talk of ſuch a virtue? We muſt, however, know the ſort of patriotiſm they deal in, whilſt the *Conſtitution* is the laſt means of national ſalvation to which they can be prevailed on to reſort.

No:—a *conſtitutional arming* muſt be the parent of a *conſtitutional Repreſentation* in Parliament. It is a meaſure that muſt teach Engliſhmen more of the Conſtitution than Miniſters are willing they ſhould know. The fruit of this knowledge muſt be a reform of that diſhoneſt, that degrading, that deteſtably

teſtably wicked, and moſt pernicious ſyſtem of governing by Corruption; a ſyſtem as ſtupid as immoral; *as the preſent dreadful ſituation of our country, ſo lately at the head of nations, ought to convince us.* When the great majority of the nation ſhall be compelled to bear arms, ſupporting the government with their purſe, and defending the commonwealth with their blood, will it ſatisfy them to be only the *paymaſters* and the *fighters*, while a paltry few, made up for the moſt part of *the venal crews, in the venal Boroughs*, are to be the *electors*, and to give rulers to the whole nation? Or will it content them that *one hundred and fifty-four* men, by buying up the dirty Boroughs, and by the tricks of venality, have made themſelves the independent and abſolute legiſlators of the land, and the unreſponſible maſters of its revenue; to the thraldom of the King, the diſhonour of the Peerage, and the grievous wrong of the People? *

To appeal to the *Conſtitution*, Miniſters themſelves muſt firſt become patriots, and make up their minds, as I conceive, to an immediate Reform of Parliament; as a meaſure neceſſarily previous to the poſſibility of arming to the extent which the exigency of the time requires.

* Inveſtigation has ſhewn, that *one hundred and fifty four* individuals, of whom more than half are peers, by being proprietors of boroughs, &c. abſolutely *appoint* a decided majority of the Houſe of Commons.

It is much and ſeriouſly to be doubted, whether a Houſe of Commons, as *now* conſtituted, would either be bold enough, or ſtrong enough, for a meaſure of ſuch magnitude, and of ſo ſtern a character, as muſt now be reſorted to. Were an act of Parliament to paſs *ſuch* a Houſe, demanding from the voluptuous, the opulent, the indolent, and the effeminate throughout the nation, a ſacrifice of their preſent habits of eaſe, diſſipation, and indulgence, and to become ſoldiers in defence of their country, would not the act be as likely to produce terror, diſmay, ferment, and convulſion, as to be comprehended and obeyed? Such an act from ſuch a Parliament, to ſuch minds, might appear intolerable; nor could the bulk of the nation, unhappily ſtrangers to arms, and to the ſeverer duties of freemen, be expected, indeed, very readily to receive from *ſuch* hands a diſcipline ſo novel, and, from that very circumſtance, apparently harſh. But widely different, indeed, would be the caſe, if a Houſe of Commons on a reformed plan, elected by the nation at large in due proportions, *for the very purpoſe of meeting the emergency*, ſhould propoſe and enact ſuch a plan of defence! Such a Houſe could not want the public confidence; ſuch a Houſe could not fall under ſuſpicion of undue influence, or of having any other intereſt than that of its conſtituents. Its ſterneſt meaſure would be conſidered as the reſult of an imperious neceſſity, to which every thing muſt yield, and the dictate of a vigorous patriotiſm.

When

When, by such a representative body, the plain alternative was stated—of submitting on one hand to the *wholesome severity of every man being armed*, and liable to be called out; or, on the other hand, *subjugation to France, with four or five hundred thousand Frenchmen in our country to secure our obedience*; there could not be a dissatisfied mind, nor a dissenting voice. But mocked, as the people under the late Rotten-borough Parliament have been, with false alarms of the wolf, they, while under a new Parliament, nominated by the *same Shepherds* as the last was, may not believe in the wolf's real approach, until the seizure of the fold, and the slaughter of the flock, prove it too late to resist.

The *persuasive* of Ministers to our Yeomanry, through the agency of Mr. *Secretary Young*, naturally calls to mind the last *persuasive* of the Emperor to the people of *Brabant*. He invited to voluntary enrolments in arms; they remembered former deceptions:—he called with anxiety; they were torpid and deaf. The one thing needful was wanting, and the country was conquered. That one thing needful was a free constitution—giving to the nation the *exercise of its legislative will* by Representatives under no controul but its own—and the *exercise of its natural strength*, by means of a natural militia, consisting of an armed inhabitancy, subject to energetic laws for giving them motion, or keeping them at rest, as the safety of the state requires.

In

In the view I have taken of the ſubject of arming, I truſt that I cannot be ſuſpected of wiſhing to diſcourage "private individuals" from following the advice of Mr. *Young*. No:—it is advice in which I will join that Gentleman with my moſt earneſt exhortations. But I am not ſo viſionary as to expect ſuch advice, at ſuch a juncture, to have the effect of ſaving the ſtate; nor do I think it a proper *ſubſtitute* for *the revival of conſtitutional laws*. As to myſelf, I had not waited for ſuch a call. Three years ago, a cheſt of muſquets, from Birmingham, armed me and my family.

Some, for ſecurity, direct their hopes to peace; but it is a dangerous error to ſuppoſe that by peace, without arming, ſecurity can be obtained. Miniſters, as I have ſaid, know that arming the nation, muſt, in its nature, produce a Reform in Parliament, and put an end to all corrupt power. This conſideration—a conſideration ſo alarming to them—may induce them to accept ſuch a peace as the Directory, *penetrating their motives*, and knowing the defenceleſs ſtate of our iſland againſt ſuch a gigantic power as their's, may dictate. What ſacrifices may thus be made by Miniſters to *France*, as the purchaſe of continued power over *England*, time muſt diſcloſe. But ſuch ſacrifices cannot do away the neceſſity of arming; and the greater thoſe ſacrifices, the ſooner muſt that neceſſity become viſible,

viſible, and with increaſed danger, to a deluded nation. Will mere peace—a triumphant peace—extorted from Monarchs by Republican arms, diſpoſe *France* to caſt away her preſent Conſtitution, for the ſake of returning to the corrupt, feeble, and odious government of deſpotiſm? IF NOT, SHE WILL REMAIN AN ARMED NATION; and there can be no ſafety for *England* but in becoming ſo likewiſe. The military peace eſtabliſhment of one country is regulated by that of another. Although the armies of *France* will not in peace be in the field, *they will be in exiſtence.* By her Conſtitution every citizen is a ſoldier, ready to march at an hour's notice. What, then, muſt be the magnitude of *our* peace eſtabliſhment, and what muſt be the enormity of its expence, if it be, as heretofore, to conſiſt of a ſtanding army?

This, then, on every account, is the time for recurring to our conſtitutional ſyſtem of arming.—The public mind is prepared for it by the preſent danger; and we have on foot a very conſiderable land force *towards* our ſecurity, until the meaſure can be completed; beſides an immenſe navy, of which only a ſmall portion can be kept in activity when the war is ended. If a peace be haſtily patched up, the bulk of the nation, not then comprehending the neceſſity, might revolt at the plan, to the great hazard of public ruin. Such an arming,

ing, at *this* time, would be the means of obtaining *a far better peace than can be obtained without it*; and ſuch an arming, while it provided a peace eſtabliſhment of abſolute ſecurity, not only from external enemies, but from mobs and inſurrections at home, would leſſen our military expences in a vaſt proportion.

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